

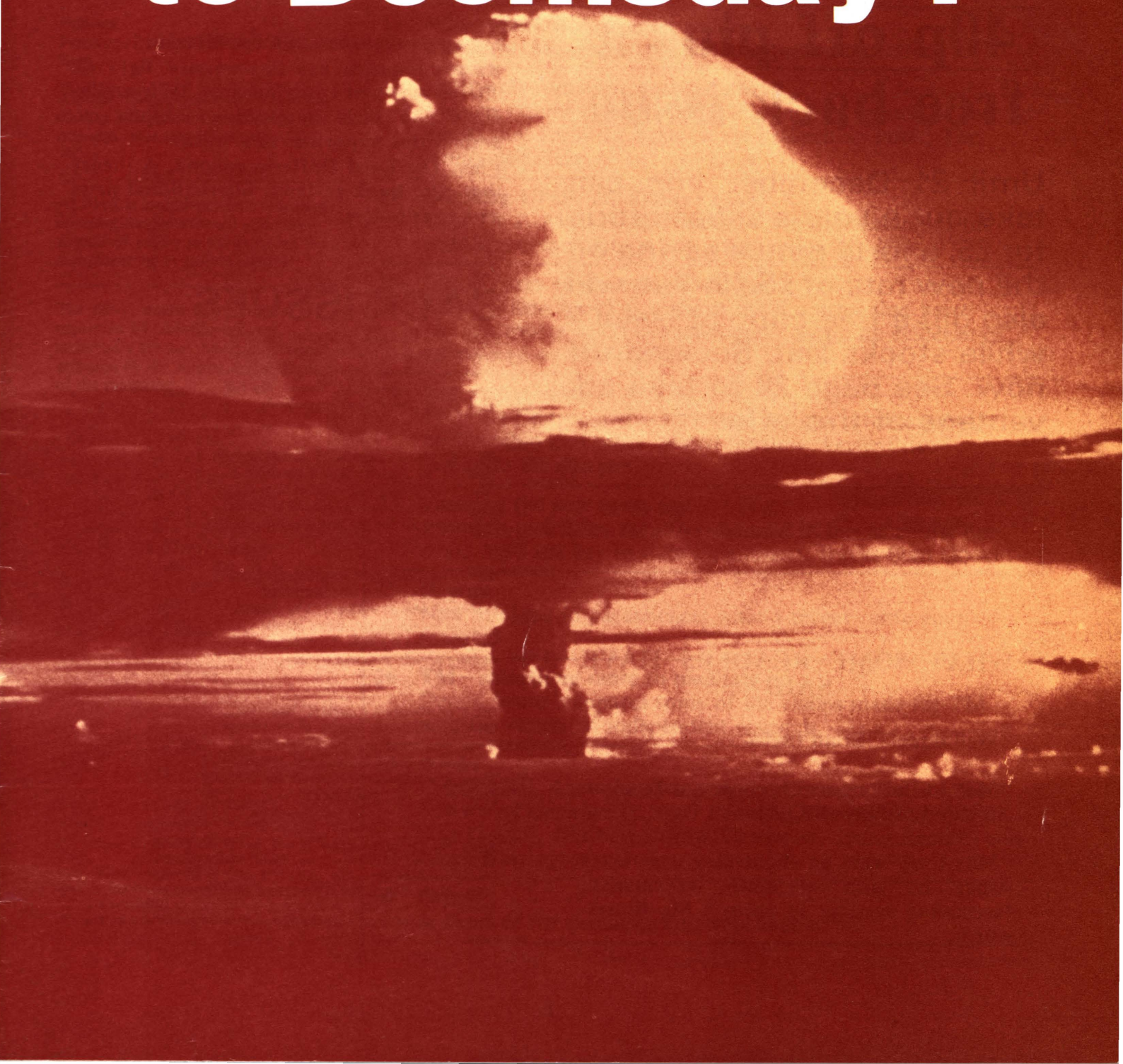
ALPHA

60p

PROBES THE PARANORMAL

Issue No 5 Nov/Dec 1979

Only twenty years to Doomsday?



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No. 5 IS ALPHA'S LAST NEWS STAND ISSUE

Beginning with the next issue, No. 6, Jan/Feb 1980, Alpha will be available on subscription only and no longer through newsagents. The reasons for this are spelt out on page 2. It is with reluctance that we make this change in the way Alpha is distributed, but the publishers are forced to take this step to ensure that the magazine continues to thrive.

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Until 21 December you can take out a year's subscription for £5, a forty pence saving on the new rate of £5.40. You will also get a free copy of Issue 2 while stocks last. So send off now. See page 28 to take advantage of this offer.

WHAT SOME READERS HAVE SAID

"Well done!" Brian Inglis.

"May I offer my sincere congratulations on Alpha" C. Maxwell Cade.

"May I say what an enlightening experience Alpha is, with so much informative, fascinating reading to enjoy" Ms Butterworth.

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The Ganzfeld Experiment
Cambridge parapsychologist, Carl Sargent, has attracted widespread attention for his successful and repeatable ESP experiments.

Superconsciousness: on the threshold
Recent research has thrown new light on altered states of consciousness, their attainment and their implications. Alpha examines this important new work.
Plus: The Lord Dufferin enigma, A theory that fits, book reviews, international news and your letters.

BACK ISSUES

No. 1 The other side of Michael Bentine. Picking up voices from the past: Margo Williams. The man who changed his mind: Prof John "Superminds" Taylor. The full story of Uri Geller. And much more.

No. 2 Korchnoi's complaint: Soviet psychic research. By Jupiter - was it Venus or a UFO? Lyall Watson: the call of strange gods. Delving in the archives of the mind. Dreaming your future. And much more.

No. 3 The invasion of Ripperstone Farm: UFO encounter. Alpha's ghost-hunt challenge: Margo Williams. The dragon stirs: an incredible discovery about megaliths and ley lines. Loch Ness's slippery secret. And much more.

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acceptance by orthodox science.

The views, claims and opinions
expressed by contributors and
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accepted by the editors and publishers
of the magazine.

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: ALPHA GOES SUBSCRIPTION

THIS is the last issue of *Alpha* to be available through newsagents. With issue No. 6 *Alpha* will be obtainable only on subscription. Full details of how you can receive the magazine appear on Page 28. We should like to say straight away that this will make no difference to the magazine's editorial policy which will continue along the lines established.

Alpha has been very well received. We have a growing number of subscribers to the magazine from 22 countries. News of our existence is reaching far afield – the latest enquiry has just arrived from Leningrad State University, Russia. Our unbiased and uncommitted approach to the paranormal has been warmly welcomed and *Alpha* is clearly fulfilling an important need.

The economics of magazine production are delicate and a 20% increase in printing charges this year has meant that we must raise the subscription – something that would not be necessary if our pages bulged with advertisements. Which brings us to the reasons for changing our method of distribution.

As we approach the end of the first year of our venture we have

had to face up to the fact that shop sales have not settled at a high enough level to make it viable to sell the magazine over the newsagent's counter. Our distributor, the wholesalers and the newsagents all take a share of the cover price for their role in supplying the magazine to the public.

Faced with these financial realities – and with a determination to continue producing the very best magazine on the paranormal – we are left with no alternative but to withdraw *Alpha* from the shops and to make it available only by post, on subscription. If you are already a subscriber your support is very much appreciated. If you are not, then we invite you to take out an annual subscription now. You'll find full details on Page 28.

What do you get in return? Six issues packed with international news, plus features by top writers on a host of fascinating subjects and interviews with people whose research is pushing back the boundaries of human knowledge, in areas that many believe are going to be of increasing importance. If you are one of that growing number, *Alpha* is essential reading. Become a subscriber now and keep in touch with what's happening in a wide range of exciting subjects.

David Harvey, Roy Stemman
Co-editors and publishers

Paranormal protest

MARY WHITEHOUSE, scourge of the obscene, has found a new target for her campaign to clean up television: the paranormal. About the Omega Factor, BBC TV's psychic thriller series which came to an end in August, she wrote to the corporation's chairman, Sir Michael Swann, to protest at the "increasing pre-occupation of broadcasters with the paranormal and occult".

What upset Mrs Whitehouse, secretary of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, was that the programmes included acts of violence as well as dealing with a theme she found objectionable.

Pushing back the frontiers

OUTSIDE THE capital and regional centres, it is not always easy to pursue specialist interests. Groups, lectures and courses tend to be centralised. There is an alternative: organise activities yourself and get the experts to come to you. That is what an enterprising group has done in Sherbourne, Dorset. Their society, the Sherborne Lecture Group, is dedicated to playing a part in "advancing the frontiers of knowledge in whatever direction those frontiers are being pushed back by the work of researchers, thinkers and practical men in their various fields."

So far it has staged talks by Professor Hasted of Birkbeck College, London, Dr John Wood, an authority on stone circles, and Maurice Grosse, who has carried out an extensive investigation of the Enfield poltergeist case.

Futher lectures are planned: Geoffrey Ashe speaks about the notion of ancient wisdom on November 16th and Sir George Trevelyan outlines the work of the the Wrekin Trust on January 31st, 1980. If you want futher details of activities, contact Nigel Blair, Beech Cottage, 79 Acreman Street, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3PH (Sherborne 2353).

New Zealand UFO

ELSEWHERE in this issue Dr J. Allen Hynek refers to the now famous film of a UFO over New Zealand (see *Alpha* No. 2), and clearly finds the case impressive. The problem, as *Alpha* has pointed out, was that the early accounts of the sighting did not give enough information for an assessment to be made, and the suggestion that it was an astronomical object seen through a temperature inversion seemed plausible.

The British UFO Research Association has now published a detailed account (*BUFORO Journal*, Vol 8, No. 4) which shows that the UFO cannot be as easily dismissed as many people thought. In fact, more than one strange light was encountered in the night sky.

The favourite explanation, from many "experts", was that the aircraft's crew and the TV team on board were looking at and filming Venus. It now transpires that the sighting lasted from 12.10 am until 2.59 am on December 31, 1978. Venus did not rise that morning until one minute after the last strange light was reported.

George Wilson, an executive with the Australian TV Channel 0 which sent up the film crew to see whether anything could be captured on camera following the reported sightings, told *Alpha* that

computer-enhancement of the TV film in the States did nothing to solve the mystery. There is still no satisfactory explanation of what was filmed since the enhancement process failed to produce any evidence that would enable the object to be identified.

International support for UFO Congress

THE First London International UFO Congress, which was held in August at the Mount Royal Hotel, was a great success. The conference – a joint effort between the British UFO Research Association and Grand Metropolitan Hotels – attracted over 400 delegates, including representatives from 18 countries.

Eight of the 14 papers presented were from overseas participants. In addition to the public presentations, much useful work was carried on behind the scenes. An international working party met to discuss classifications and terminology.

Delegates were also shown the documentary film, "UFOs, Past, Present, and Future" which was given its UK premiere.

French UFO study

FRANCE is apparently the only country – out of 133 from which the American Center for UFO Studies receives UFO reports – which has a systematic, government-funded organisation for the scientific investigation of UFO phenomena. (One disregards from this statement those governments which may be carrying out covert investigations.)

The French study is known as

GEPAN (Groupe d'Etudes Des Phenomenes Aerspatiaux Aeriales Nonidentifies) and is part of Centre Nationale Etude Spatiales, the French counterpart to NASA.

Whereas NASA has publicly refused President Carter's request to take over the investigation of UFOs, the CNES established GEPAN in May, 1977, on its own initiative and is taking its responsibilities seriously.

The *Bulletin* of Dr J. Allen Hynek's Center for UFO Studies reports that GEPAN's first chief was Dr Claude Poher, a pioneer in UFO studies, who has taken leave from the organisation in order to sail around the world in a boat he built himself. The new chief, Dr Alain Esterle, an aeronautical engineer with a doctorate in applied mathematics, has recently visited the USA and consulted with members of several UFO organisations, including CUFOS, where he spent a whole day.

GEPAN confines its study to French UFO reports but there are more than enough to deal with. It has received 800 sighting reports so far, and the Gendarmerie (which does a very efficient job of investigating reports) passes 20 a month, on average, to GEPAN for further study.

Navy chief probes UFOs

LORD Hill-Norton, Admiral of the Fleet, is taking a keen interest in UFOs, according to the *Sunday Express* (September 19). The former Chief of Defence Staff has attended a meeting of the House of Lords study group on UFOs, which was set up under the chairmanship of Lord Clancarty after the Lords debate on the

subject (*Alpha*, No. 2).

"There are things in this field that have not been explained to my satisfaction," Lord Hill-Norton told the newspaper. "I have never seen a UFO, and I don't know anything about the subject; but I have an open mind. I went to the meeting out of curiosity. I shall almost certainly go to the next meeting."

Loch Ness theory

AUGUST IS the traditional season for Loch Ness monster stories and this year has been no exception.

The *New Scientist* started the ball rolling with an article by Drs D. Power and D. Johnson entitled "A fresh look at Nessie", (2 August). They advanced a new theory, without letting their straight faces crack, that what everyone has mistaken for a monster was, in fact, an elephant taking the waters with only its trunk visible above the water.

It drew the inevitable replies including a well-paced piece from Y. Franz Daun: "I suspect that the elephants live in caves along the Creag Dhearg, at the north end of the loch, as this area is rarely visited by outsiders, and is very secluded. I have seen considerable tree-damage in this region, caused by the elephants, and on one occasion I was able to follow a small herd of four or five in the early morning. I only hope the emergence of the truth does not dramatically increase the number of visitors to the area, as these wonderful animals are very fond of their privacy."

It's nice to know that the silly season still means something.

Hunting Nessie

MORE news about the plan to capture the Loch Ness monster on film using dolphins equipped with cameras and strobe lights. The expedition, sponsored by the Academy of Applied Science in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, had to be abandoned earlier this year when one of the dolphins trained for the underwater search died just before she was due to be flown to Britain. Now the Academy is looking for a suitable pair of dolphins which are already in this country.

According to a report from Ian Ball, the *Daily Telegraph's* New York correspondent (August 1), the academy is prepared to invest £25,000 and the cost of several tons of fish to put its plan into operation. Charles Wyckoff, the expedition's photographic director, told the journalist that they were prepared to persevere for several years "before we get what we want".

Bequests

TWO Torquay, Devon, women who died in May this year have left money to promote psychic study and healing. Ellen Grace Lester, widow of Lt-Col Reginald Lester, founder of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, died on May 8, leaving £122,686 (£121,711 net). Her bequests included £5,000 to the fellowship which her husband founded.

Mrs Jeannie Lina Collinson, who died on May 30 leaving £72,687 (£72,208 net), left £6,500 and some effects variously to personal legatees. The residue goes to the Harry Edwards Spiritual Healing Sanctuary, Shere, Surrey, which—since the death of the famous healer—is run by his former helpers Ray and Joan Branch.



Dr Douglas Dean

Rhine gets an apology

DR DOUGLAS DEAN, a former president of America's Parapsychological Association, spoke in London, in September, about the "incredible story of John Wheeler".

On the opening day of the Parascience Conference (see report Page 27) Dean reminded his audience that Wheeler, an eminent American scientist, had made "the most vicious, dirty, low-down attack" on parapsychologists at the last annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. His aim was to get the Parapsychological Association (which has been an AAAS member since 1969) thrown out of the AAAS.

Wheeler had listed eight cases from psychic literature which, when Dean checked them, he discovered were the *opposite* to what Wheeler had stated. Furthermore, Wheeler suggested that J. B. Rhine—the "father" of parapsychology—had "fudged" his early ESP results: that he cheated, and it was on the basis of these false claims that para-

psychology was started.

Dean was amazed that Wheeler should make such an attack. Having spent two hours with him discussing the introduction of consciousness into physics, Dean was certain that Wheeler was "one of us". And since it was Dean's efforts which were largely responsible for getting the AAAS to accept the PA's membership ten years earlier, he was not going to take Wheeler's accusations lying down.

Instead of seeing parapsychologists thrown out of the AAAS, Dean initiated proceedings to get Wheeler thrown out. The affair, however, has had a happy conclusion. The July 13 issue of *Science*, which goes to 125,000 scientists, contains a letter from Wheeler apologising to Rhine for his statements. Rhine was also given the opportunity to comment.

Keeping you in the picture

FINDING pictures to illustrate features on the paranormal is a problem which confronts publishers around the world... unless they've heard of the Mary Evans Picture Library. The MEPL, which was started in 1964, has several million historical pictures. But in recent years, Hilary Evans, an SPR member, has set about creating a central archive of illustrations of the paranormal, as part of MEPL's impressive collection.

Hilary is a contributor to this issue on that very subject (and contributed a thought-provoking feature on UFOs to *Alpha* No. 2). His plan to assemble a collection of visual documentation of the paranormal has already met with success. In addition to the MEPL's existing material, Hilary has been able to get the archive off to a good start by photographing material from the SPR's archives. The picture library also houses the Sigmund Freud family photograph collection.

Now comes news that MEPL has been able to copy all the major items from the Harry Price Collection at the University of London, which includes a unique range of material from Borley Rectory to The Talking Mongoose of Cashen's Gap.

"What we are trying to do is to provide a central source where researchers from all over the world can have a reasonable hope of finding pictures in this hard-to-find field," says Hilary. "So much of this kind of material is sitting about in private hands, where nobody knows where to lay hands on it: we want to make it as available and as accessible to

serious students of the subject as possible."

Even though they must now possess one of the most useful collections of its kind in the field, the Evanses are not satisfied. They are confident that there is plenty more material scattered around the world, often where hardly anyone knows of its existence. Their aim is to gather or copy as much of this elusive material as possible before it vanishes forever.

So, if you have illustrative material relating to any aspect of the paranormal—from strange visions in the heavens to spirit photographs of Aunt Flo, dating from the past or relating to on-going activities—to donate, sell or simply lend so that it can be copied and preserved, the Evanses would be very pleased to hear from you. Hilary and Mary can be contacted at the Mary Evans Picture Library, 1 Tranquil Vale, London SE3 0BU.

Death of Rosa Kuleshova

THE ability of Rosa Kuleshova to "see" with her fingers caused a sensation when the story leaked out of Russia in the 1960s. It was said that Rosa could distinguish colours and even read with her fingers when blindfolded. This dermo-optic ability has been reported in other people, too, though suspicions remain that many people who claim such an ability are simply cheating.

The *International Journal of Paraphysics* (Vol 13, Nos. 3 & 4 combined) carries the news that Rosa is dead. It reports that shortly before her death in 1978 she had visited the editorial offices of *Technika Mologej*, a Moscow journal, where she conducted a number of experiments to demonstrate her "eyeless vision". The Russian periodical comments that the cause of her death was a brain tumour in the right occipital region, which caused a haemorrhage. "The fact that she died from a brain disease further perplexes researchers trying to discover the secret of her unusual abilities," it adds.

Not so blind

THE same issue of the *International Journal of Paraphysics* carries a report about another celebrated Soviet psychic, Tophik Dadashev, together with a photograph of him demonstrating his powers with a hood over his head. The account, and that of Rosa Kuleshova, has to be read with a certain amount of caution. After all, British newspapers in September carried the story of Romark, the illusionist who drove

his car while blindfolded. Unhappily for him he was not as successful as the psychics already mentioned . . . he crashed into a police vehicle. He was found guilty of reckless driving, fined £100 and ordered to pay £220 costs.

During the case the illusionist explained that before the stunt pieces of dough and 10p pieces were placed over each eye. He was then blindfolded. "By lifting the eyelids," he told the court, "you can see beneath the mask. It's all an illusion. Anyone can do it."

Submarine ESP

DOES ESP work under water? Back in the 1950s a report appeared which claimed the US Navy had carried out secret telepathy tests with the atomic submarine *Nautilus*, sending messages from the submerged submarine to agents on land. It seems unlikely that the claim was true, but it apparently encouraged the Russians to study the subject and carry out their own underwater research using animals.

Since then, researchers in the States—such as Douglas Dean—have been trying to obtain the Navy's co-operation, and one of its submarines for ESP research. Despite promises to Dean, during his 12 years at the Newark College of Engineering, the US Navy has failed to make a submarine available.

So it was with some excitement that Dean told the Parascience Conference that fellow parapsychologists Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ have been successful with such an experiment.

Puthoff and Targ, famous for their remote viewing experiments at the Stanford Research Institute, California, apparently used two of their star subjects, Ingo Swann, the New York psychic, and Hella Hammid. Each went down in a submarine separately, to a depth of 500 feet, and the remote viewing results were just as good as those they achieved on dry land in a Faraday cage designed to block electro-magnetic signals. The results of this fascinating new study have not yet been published by the American scientists.

Psychics at Princeton

DOUGLAS DEAN, whose contagious enthusiasm for psychic research makes him an engaging lecturer, also reported to the Parascience Conference that having lived in Princeton, New Jersey, for 28 years it has been his dearest wish to set up a laboratory at the city's University.

He was pleased to report that Chuck Hornorton—formerly director of research at the Division of Parapsychology and Psychophysics at Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York—has been invited to move his laboratory to the James Forrestal Research Center (which was established in 1951 by Princeton university to expand its research facilities). He has just moved in.

Dean was even more delighted to report that parapsychology had become a legitimate study within the main part of the University, too. It happened because one of the students wanted to study the subject and she asked Dean Jahn, the Dean of Engineering, to be her adviser. When he asked her what work was being done in the field she was able to supply him with 100 research papers. Subsequently, he visited parapsychology labs to see their work and was impressed.

In time, the student—Carol—and Jahn tried remote viewing experiments with remarkably successful results. Jahn is one of the world's leading experts on electrical propulsion for rockets, and whenever he went overseas to attend conferences Carol would attempt to "see" at a distance what he was seeing, sometimes producing quite complicated drawings.

On one occasion, while she was babysitting in Princeton, Carol was able to draw a picture of what Jahn was seeing in Russia. The ESPionage potential of such an experiment is obvious.

The amusing sequel to this story is that Carol has since abandoned her parapsychology study in favour of marriage. But Jahn hasn't. Now he is collaborating with Brenda Dunn, who has just got her master degree in psychology, on precognitive remote viewing.

Psychotronic generators

REPORTS from Czechoslovakia about the invention of psychotronic generators by a man named Robert Pavlita have excited a lot of interest in the West. The devices are said to be able to store human psychic energy and then be used to perform a variety of functions. British researcher Benson Herbert (editor of the *International Journal of Paraphysics*) visited Pavlita in 1970, in the company of two American scientists, and has since been attempting to produce the same effects in his laboratory at Downton, Wiltshire.

He reports (Vol 13, Nos 3 & 4) that he has succeeded in doing so, and that there is a normal explanation for what occurs. Herbert, it should be pointed out, was not given a psychotronic generator to experiment with, but his research has used similar-looking devices.

"We should make it quite clear at this stage," he writes, "that we are not in any way suggesting that fraud or trickery is employed. Both Pavlita and his daughter show every sign of being serious and honest and there is just no evidence of subterfuge apart from the secrecy which is understandable in the circumstances."

"However, fabrication of simulated phenomena is something which is necessary for all scientists investigating psychic functions to study . . . It is proper, therefore, to consider normal explanations of the Pavlita phenomena (after all, Pavlita may have misinterpreted his own experiments without any intent to deceive). . . ."

On the trail of Big Foot

A SOVIET expedition is searching the Pamir mountains in Central Asia for Big Foot, a huge, hairy creature which has been reported several times in the area. An 11-man expedition is setting up two or three permanent observation posts near Lake Sarez. Members of earlier expeditions to the region reported seeing Big Foot, and those involved in the current search have declared that they have no intention of harming the creature.

Predicting the worst

SAN FRANCISCO'S August earthquake was the strongest since 1911. But despite this reminder that a serious disaster could be just around the corner, most Californians seem prepared to accept the risks fatalistically. Scientists monitoring the San Andreas fault are not so phlegmatic. The State's Seismic Safety Commission now believes there is a 50-50 chance of a major earthquake in the next decade. The odds in favour of this occurring have increased.

On the basis of Federal studies, the Big One, a quake equal to the 1906 quake that registered 8.3 on the Richter scale, would devastate San Francisco. The August tremors reached 5.6. If it occurred during rush hour, it would cause 10,000 deaths, 50,000 injuries and make 100,000 homeless. That it will happen is regarded as almost

inevitable. The question is, when?

Early prediction is the key to saving lives. The Stanford Research Institute's study of animal behaviour suggests one way of anticipating disaster. The project revealed that before the quake, animals in zoos behaved in unusual ways: llamas ran around wildly all night, tigers were restless and birds flew into windows. But the reports by SRI's 900 animal-watching volunteers were not considered adequate grounds for evacuating the city. Next time, the earthquake could be severe. Even if these signs are noted again, will they be acted on? For that matter, if premonitions bureaux come up with strong warnings of disaster, will they too be ignored?

Is magnetism the answer?

AN AMERICAN scientist has made a discovery which he believes solves the mystery of how pigeons return to their homes. Prof Charles Walcott, a New York biologist, has found a tiny piece of iron-rich tissue in the heads of pigeons which was highly magnetic. It suggests that pigeons may use the earth's magnetic field for navigation when they could not see the sun.

The tissue, believed to contain magnetite, is less than a square millimetre in size. The same substance is also found in bees which are noted for their navigational abilities, too. But, apart from the discovery, there is as yet no direct proof to link the existence of the tissue in pigeons with their homing instinct.

Ghost hunting

AMERICANS have always had a soft spot for Britain's past. Its ghosts, apparently, are as big a draw as the stately homes and other historic buildings they inhabit. A Californian company, Take Me Along Travel, netted a good catch of psychic enthusiasts when it advertised its trip to investigate haunted London.

Two hundred people made the trip to London to do the rounds of some of the capital's haunted establishments including the Grenadier pub in a mews behind Hyde Park Corner, Covent Garden Underground station, Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and old favourites such as the Tower of London. They also took in the Bank of England, a site allegedly haunted by a wailing nun who blamed the bank for her financial ruin. The fact that she will be helping Britain's invisible earnings along will probably be of little comfort to her.

Doomsday – only 20 years to go?

Carol Kennedy has been looking at world predictions from ancient seers like Nostradamus to modern clairvoyants, such as Jeane Dixon. Have they really seen what the future has in store for us?



IN 1843 a fundamentalist group called the Millerites, precursors of the Seventh Day Adventists, were assured by their founder William Miller that the world was about to end. They gave away their possessions, put on “ascension robes” and waited, confident that they would be saved, for the great day. To Miller’s embarrassment, and doubtless the annoyance of his followers, who were now left only with the robes they stood up in, nothing happened. Miller tried again the following year but died before he had a chance to predict a third Last Coming.

Man’s fascination with anticipating his own ultimate destruction stretches back into the mists of Chaldean astrology – which gave the world a span of 7,000 years – and endures into our own time, when the possibility of such a disaster has at last been given a real, atomic form. From time to time some fringe religious cult is reported preparing for the final curtain; in 1962, Indian astrologers predicted the end of the world or some dread catastrophe, caused by a particular conjunction of seven planets which had not happened since February 5, 1524 (although the world obviously survived that).

Baleful groupings in the heavens have

always been grist to the prophets of doom. In 1961, the late Edward Whitman, then secretary of the Federation of British Astrologers, predicted that the Third World War would break out in 1973, a year when Mars, Gemini and the Moon would be in conjunction in exactly the same configuration as they were in 1914 and 1939. Not only that, but Mercury, representing the USA, and Saturn, governing the Communist countries, would be in violent opposition that year. Thankfully, Whitman was wrong about World War III, but at the same time he accurately prophesied 1968 as a year of “world political upheaval.”

In 1583 one Richard Harvey, basing his calculations on another conjunction – this time of Jupiter and Saturn – stated firmly that at 12 noon on April 28 that year “a great wind” would spring up, heralding the end of the world. When on April 29 the world was plainly still there, Harvey’s reputation suffered a setback from which it never really recovered, and other Elizabethan astrologers who had been pouring out the disaster scenarios beloved of the contemporary public became suddenly chary of predicting anything for 1588, a year for which the planets showed historic events. As things turned out, that

was a pity, because they missed the chance to predict the Spanish Armada.

It is easy enough to make fun of all the ends of the world that weren’t, but two disturbingly consistent strains of prophecy, running from Biblical times through the celebrated quatrains of Nostradamus, the French 16-th century seer, to the predictions of modern American psychics like Edgar Cayce and Jeane Dixon, are, if anything, gathering force as we enter the last 20 years of this century. They concern the timing and description of some overwhelming disaster for mankind; the dates homing in repeatedly on the period 1995 to 2000 AD, with 1999 the most-predicted year. The descriptions, from Old Testament prophets on (“the day that shall burn like an oven”, references to “two suns” in the sky and “blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood”) bear an unnervingly close resemblance to the effects of an atomic war.

The most specific timing of all comes in the only Nostradamus prophecy to state a precise date for a catastrophe – July, 1999. “In the year 1999 and seven months, from the sky will come the great king of terror . . . before and after, war reigns happily.” Nostradamus, a Provencal physician and

astrologer (real name Michel de Notredame), published the first edition of his famous *Centuries* in 1555. This was a series of prophecies, based on visions and recounted in four-line verses, deliberately arranged in non-chronological order and couched in obscure, symbolic language so as not to cause mass alarm or get himself in trouble with the Church. Since his death, an average of 30 editions or commentaries have been published each century – some, as in the Nazi versions printed to strike fear into the simpler folk of occupied Europe, outright forgeries. The most recent translation is by Erika Cheetham, reprinted seven times since 1975, and the quotations from Nostradamus which appear here are from her edition.

Much of Nostradamus can be dismissed as sheer historical coincidence or just too obscure to have any meaning, but some of his prophecies – notably about air travel, the 1918 'flu epidemic, World War II, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and even the abdication of Edward VIII, have been readily identifiable. His verse about a German leader named "Hister" bringing war to Europe has been often quoted; the one about the abdication crisis of 1936 less often: "For not wanting to consent to the divorce, which then afterwards will be recognised as unworthy, the King of the Islands will be forced to flee, and one put in his place who has no sign of kingship." *Century X*, 22).

In this context, though, it is perhaps worth noting that interpretation of Nostradamus' gnomic utterances has varied through time as events seemed to fit: another quatrain, now usually attributed to the abdication (*Century X*, 40) runs: "The young born to the realm of Britain, which his dying father had commended to him. Once he is dead, London will dispute with him, and the kingdom will be demanded back from the son." The original version in Nostradamus' arcane Franco-Latin argot featured an anagram typical of its author's mischievous word-play – Lonole. Cheetham reads this straightforwardly as London, with the dying father Gerge V and the son Edward VIII. But for decades it was thought to refer to Cromwell and Charles I – the American Jesse Stearn interpreted Lonole as an anagram of Ole Nole, one of Oliver Cromwell's nicknames being Old Noll.

Stearn, writing in 1963, before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, also puts a significantly different gloss onto one of several Nostradamus verses now generally linked with the Kennedy brothers. This is *Century IX*, 36, which runs: "A great king captured by the hands of a young man . . . three brothers will be wounded and murdered." Stearn ties this decisively to Henri III of France, the third of three brothers to occupy the French throne and meet death.

Up to a point, then, Nostradamus interpreters through the ages can be said to exercise Humpty Dumpty's philosophy in *Through the Looking Glass*: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to



Nostradamus predicted the rise of a German leader named "Hister".

mean." But that still leaves us with a number of disquieting predictions which clearly refer to future – and all too possible – political/military developments.

There is a constant theme, for instance, of war erupting in the Middle East, and of a leader from Asia, tentatively identified as the third Antichrist (after Napoleon and Hitler) who will bring dire trouble to the world. (*Century VI*, 80), offers just one of these visions: "From Fez, the kingdom will stretch out to those of Europe. The city blazes, the sword will slash; the great man of Asia with a great troop by land and sea . . . he will drive out the cross to death." Elsewhere, this leader, "who will bring trouble to the East", is identified as being born on a Thursday "under the three water signs." A third reference, to an Arab

1999/2000 AD will see a devastating war says Edgar Cayce.

prince and a conjunction of Mars, the Sun, Venus and Leo, was interpreted in 1942 by the American astrologer Leo McCann as implying a new Arab empire will attack Iran, Egypt and the navies of the Christian nations on August 21, 1987.

Many of Nostradamus' prophecies of disaster at the end of the century are linked with planetary movements, though often expressed in irritatingly vague terms. Also, of course, the second millenium is a natural focus for cataclysmic thoughts. Nevertheless, he is sometimes extremely specific about planetary effects. In *Century VI*, 24, he pinpoints the conjunction of Mars and Jupiter bringing "a calamitous war under Cancer." The only time this conjunction will occur, says Cheetham, is on June 21, 2002.

Nostradamus can be maddeningly imprecise in other references; as for instance when he speaks of this fateful war

inflicting the greatest damage "on the left". You can read that either, as Cheetham does, the left-hand side of a world atlas, which includes the United States, or the politically-aligned left. In *Century IV*, 95, however, he states categorically that the victor of this great war will be born in America. Elsewhere, Nostradamus forecasts a war between China and the States, which will be started by China.

When he gets around to describing the final cataclysm, Nostradamus often gets uncomfortably close to the effects of atomic blast and fallout. In one verse he speaks of "red hail covering the earth" – a rather accurate description of the dust-filled raindrops which fell after Nagasaki and Hiroshima. In his famous prediction of that bombing ("Near the harbour and in the two cities will be two scourges, the like of which have never been seen . . .") he also refers to "plague" as a result. Cheetham notes that plague sufferers, with whom Nostradamus would have been familiar, displayed a blackened look about the face very similar to the victims of radiation.

Some of Nostradamus' most graphic disaster scenarios seem to refer directly to New York ("la cite neufve"). In one (*Century VI*, 97) he writes: "The sky will burn at 45 degrees. Fire approaches the great New City. Immediately a huge scattered flame leaps up . . ." (As Cheetham points out, New York county lies between the 40th and 45th parallels in the USA.) Again in *Century I*, 87, he writes: "Earth-shaking fire from the centre of the earth will cause tremors around the New City. Two great rocks will war for a long time, then Arethusa will redden a new river." Cheetham interprets "Arethusa" as an amalgam of Ares, god of war, and the USA.

Curiously, this seems to refer less to an atomic attack than to an earthquake, which ties up with a vision the Kentucky seer Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) had in 1936 of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco being devastated by earthquakes. But this was set much later – Cayce's vision was of flying across the US in 2100 AD and of landing in the ruins of a huge city in the process of being rebuilt. When he asked the name of the city he was told "New York." Vast earthquakes also affecting the Southern and Western USA, Japan and northern Europe were linked in Cayce's vision with danger from the submerged and mythical continent of Atlantis. But before these events took place, Cayce also foretold a devastating war in 1999-2000 AD.

A more modern American psychic than Cayce, also convinced of a global war in 1999-2000, is Jeane Dixon, who rose to fame by predicting the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Lyndon Johnson's premature withdrawal from politics. She also predicted, in the 1950s, three US presidents between 1961 and 1969, which must have seemed unlikely given the usual expectation of two terms each, but which proved accurate

(Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon). In her war scenario, Mrs. Dixon predicted "Chinese and Mongol troops invading the Middle East . . . devastating battles raging uncontrollably east of the Jordan river. It is a war of East against West. It will be an almost futile fight against an overwhelming foe, but the Lord will place himself at the side of Israel and great losses will be suffered by the Orientals."

Interestingly, she also had a vision of a new "antichrist" from the Middle East, who would be born on February 5, 1962, and grow to maximum power in 1999.

Mrs Dixon, it must be said, has a somewhat spotty record of accuracy. She was wrong, for instance, in predicting that President Johnson would make an even greater mark on history as an elder statesman than a president – he did not live long enough. She was certainly wrong that a US withdrawal in Vietnam would "let the South Vietnamese win their war against the Communists", and that the two-party system in American politics would vanish before 1978.

Still, some of her published predictions may be worth watching:

- Peace in Ireland "as soon as the influence of certain American, self-righteous groups is eliminated" (she was writing in 1969 at the very outset of the conflict but could "get no timing" on a solution).

- A woman US president in the 1980s.

- A Pope assassinated in this century, one "whose election will not be approved by the Roman clergy." The Pope concerned would be "the last ever to reign as singular head of the Church."

- A Red Chinese invasion of America in 2025 AD.

- A comet striking the earth in the mid-1980s. Nostradamus also refers several times to a comet near the end of the century bringing "great misery for mankind" and "a dreadful destruction to people and animals." Halley's comet, last seen in 1910, is due to pass the earth again in 1986.

Monks through the ages have proved dab hands at prophecy, although the Irishman Malachy's one-line predictions, supposed to refer to each Pope until the last (we are now said to be at No. 108 out of 111) are on the whole too generalised to be impressive. Much more alarming was a gloss on biblical prophecies published in 1790 by an anonymous Polish monk. His pinpointing of the year 1938 for a "universal war" is close enough to raise a few shivers about the rest. Here is an extract:

"All which may be considered appalling and terrible will befall the human race in this century (the 20th). By the beginning of the year 1900 in many countries the princes will revolt against their fathers, the citizens against their governments, children against their parents and the whole human race against each other. So it will last until the year 1938 when a universal war . . . will draw all creation into destruction. Devastation and destruction will overtake whole countries, desolate, empty of



"World to an end will come In nineteen hundred and eighty one" said Mother Shipton, 500 years ago. Scientists warn that 1982's planetary alignment could impose disastrous strains on earth. A near miss?

people, and destroyed will be the greatest and most respected cities.

"In the year 1986 peace will be established. It will be only a few years . . . in 1988 a terrible comet will appear in the heavens and by a cruel blow on the earth will raise the water from the sea and drown whole lands. In 1996 a universal earthquake will shake the whole earth, and all Italy, Naples, Sicily, Portugal and Spain will vanish forever into the ground.

"Finally there comes in the year 2000 the last day of the Lord, on which he judges the living and the dead. Stars and comets will fall from the heavens and set the earth on fire with lightning; and so will this earth pass . . ."

Can prophecies save people from their own folly?

Another who predicted World War II in accurate terms, even to the United States going to war with Japan "later in the European carnage" was Count Louis Hamon, known professionally as Cheiro, who made his reputation giving psychic readings for various distinguished Britons in late Victorian and Edwardian times. He warned both the London editor W. T. Stead and Lord Kitchener of danger in travelling by sea, with specific advice against it in April, 1912 and June, 1916 respectively. Ignoring his warnings – and in Stead's case, a number of other premonitions – Stead drowned on the Titanic and Kitchener on HMS Hampshire.

Cheiro's *World Predictions*, published in 1927, uncannily prefigured Cayce in warning of earthquakes destroying eastern cities of North America and "a considerable part of New York", though his timing

(taking it no later than the 1970s) was obviously out. Like Cayce, too, he predicted the rediscovery of Atlantis within 100 years after this.

His World War II prophecy came in a book published in 1931, which also predicted India's independence, followed by bitter religious war; civil war between northern and southern Ireland and the biblical Armageddon occurring "on the plains of Palestine" as foretold in Ezekiel, probably with Russian involvement. The Second World War, he said, would be far greater and worse than the last, but would be only one of many "in the next few hundred years leading up to Armageddon."

The patterns of prophecy are still unmapped psychological terrain, and the most unlikely people can have glimpses of another stream of time. Whenever the subject of Titanic premonitions crops up, for instance, someone is sure to raise the extraordinary case of the unknown author, Morgan Robertson, who in 1898 published a potboiling novel called *Futility*. In it, he told how the world's largest and latest ocean liner, the 70,000-ton, 800-foot-long S.S. Titan, struck an iceberg on her maiden voyage in April between Southampton and New York, with 2,500 people on board. The ship's 24 lifeboats were capable of holding fewer than half that number. Fourteen years later, Robertson's fictional pre-vision, so accurate as to be uncanny (the Titanic was 66,000 tons, 882 feet long and carried 2,207 souls, with lifeboats for fewer than half) was hailed as the most astounding instance of direct prophecy on record.

Sometimes, of course, prophecies can be self-fulfilling. When Hitler's advisers discovered passages in Nostradamus that seemed to imply a victorious sweep for him, did that in some way change the direction of the war? The possibility cannot be discounted, since Hitler was a committed believer in astrology. Governments in earlier times have seen the political value of carefully controlled astrological announcements. But equally, prophets of disaster can save people from their own folly by warning of a potential outcome.

And psychics of various kinds often do get their visions mixed up or their planetary alignments miscalculated, as we have seen with Jeane Dixon and the luckless Richard Harvey. Nostradamus even got the date of his own death wrong by 16 months – dying in July 1566 instead of November 1567.

A small enough error if one is contemplating whether to extend one's insurance policies beyond 1999, but comforting nonetheless. And the latest scientific assessment of the end of the world – fitting most of the time-honoured scenarios with the sun burning up, oceans boiling and the earth's crust cracking under intense heat – has recently come from a Canadian astronomer addressing a scientific conference in Montreal.

It would certainly happen, he said – but not for about one million years.

How many people are you?

Colin Wilson reviews 'Eve', the story of a woman who changed into other people, and discusses the significance of this and other equally fascinating and baffling cases of multiple personality.

TWENTYONE years ago, the author of *Eve*, Chris Sizemore, embarked on her first venture into authorship. It was a book called *Strangers in My Body* (in America, *The Final Face of Eve*) and it was a flop. This was largely predictable, for it was basically a rehash of an earlier bestseller called *The Three Faces of Eve* by two psychiatrists, Thigpen and Cleckley, which told the story of the demure, hard-working little housewife who periodically turned into a mischievous and fun-loving stranger. The problem, of course, was that Thigpen and Cleckley had already told the story so competently and dramatically that the patient's own unsophisticated account of her illness was an anticlimax.

Now she has decided to make another attempt to tell the whole story—with further details of another 18 “extra” personalities. The result, *Eve*, is more than twice as long as *Strangers in My Body*, and the hardcover edition, which came out in 1978, was considerably more successful. Whether it is, in fact, a better or more interesting book is open to question; a remark I must immediately qualify by saying that, in spite of its poor reception by the critics, *Strangers in My Body* struck me as an important and fascinating psychological document.

This subject of multiple personality aroused a great deal of interest among psychologists in the second half of the 19th century. And it is, most certainly, a weird and baffling phenomenon. What happens, basically, is that a person suddenly loses his—or her—memory and becomes a totally different person. This new personality often does things that are completely at odds with the old personality. In one case, for example, a quiet and rather mousey housewife would wake up and find herself in bed with a muscular stranger—who was usually sleeping heavily after a bout of prolonged intercourse. . . .

In one of the most famous of the early cases, that of “Christine Beauchamp”, the patient “came to” in another city, and found herself working as a waitress. Her last memory was of working in an office in Boston; her *alter ego* had walked out of the job, sold some jewellery to obtain the train fare, gone to another town and found herself lodgings and a new job that was more to her taste than an office.

Cases like this had been observed since 1816; and interest in them reached a peak in the first decade of this century, with the publication of Moreton Prince's book about Christine Beauchamp (*The Dissociation of a Personality*, 1905), and

Boris Sidis's *Researches in Mental Dissociation* (1902). Then an odd thing happened. Psychiatrists suddenly lost interest in the whole question. The number of recorded cases declined and it became fashionable to dismiss it as a disguised form of hysteria or even straightforward shamming by the patient.

The reason is almost certainly that psychiatrists preferred to devote their attention to exciting new theories—like Freudianism and Behaviourism—and felt that multiple personality was probably an old wives' tale that had gained currency through poor observation and badly designed experiment.

So when Thigpen and Cleckley produced



Colin Wilson has made a special study of multiple personality cases.

The Three Faces of Eve in 1957, the whole subject again had the freshness of novelty. At the same time, their orthodox Freudian interpretation reassured the sceptics; they felt that “Eve's” illness must be due to the usual parental problems—the desire to murder her mother and sleep with her father. That explanation seemed to satisfy everybody. And the problem was again conveniently forgotten—or at least, filed away.

In 1965, Dr Clifford Allen had published a revised version of his *Modern Discoveries in Medical Psychology*, first published in 1937. In this excellent volume, he has a chapter on Moreton Prince and the Christine Beauchamp case in which the whole problem of multiple personality is “cut down to size.” Allen explains that the

mind could be compared to an income tax office, in which the clerks begin to squabble among themselves, and refuse to co-operate. Moreover, they begin to play tricks on one another, forging false income tax letters and pretending they have come from members of the public. This, he says, is all that happens in cases like that of Christine Beauchamp—a kind of inner squabble. And he remarks in a postscript that Christine Beauchamp's problems finally went away when Moreton Prince lost interest and stopped writing books about her. . . .

But the problem has declined to go away. In 1973, Flora Rheta Schreiber's *Sybil* recorded a case of a girl who split into no less than 16 distinct personalities, all of whom behaved and talked with complete autonomy. And Schreiber notes that in one case of multiple personality, each of the four “selves” had different responses for word-association tests, and that in another, their EEGs (brainwaves) were different—which is as absurd as the same person having different set of fingerprints.

The flat truth is that Allen's theory—about the “tax office” structure of consciousness—will just not hold water. If the personalities are really just chips off one original block, then they ought to have the same brainwave patterns and the same word-association responses. In fact, such cases look far more like the mediaeval concept of possession. It is just as if the same body is literally taken over by a series of different people, each with his own personality.

The latest case to catch the headlines in America is that of William Stanley Milligan, who is charged with kidnapping, rape and robbery. Under observation, Milligan turns out to have ten distinct personalities, one of them a woman. One of these personalities is a psychopath—the rapist. And another one of the personalities, a “goody”, pretty certainly turned him in to the cops.

Compared with Milligan and “Sybil”, the case of *Eve*—Chris Sizemore—is not really very remarkable. She differed from most famous cases of multiple personality in having had a fairly stable childhood, with loving parents.

Her major mental upset was the arrival of twins in the family. At the age of six, her *alter-ego* (“Eve Black”) made her debut by smashing a friend's china doll that she coveted. Shortly after this, Eve Black attacked the twins as they lay in their cot, biting them and poking at their eyes. On both occasions, “Eve White” blacked out for a moment, and came-to to find herself



Illustration: John Ireland

being thrashed for something she could not remember doing.

While still a child, Eve White got religion—to Eve Black's indignation and disgust. She seems to have become a thorough little prig. Eve White was also good at school, and for several years, Eve Black kept out of the way, because she disliked school. Then, in her mid-teens, the death of her grandfather seems to have reactivated her neurosis. She fell in love, and when her boyfriend threw her over, made a suicide attempt by drinking iodine. After this, she made a thoroughly unsuitable marriage with a racing car driver which broke up—aided by her “husband’s” confession that he was already married; but she soon married again, this time an ex-soldier.

At this point, there seems to be a discrepancy between the earlier and later books. In the earlier one, she tells how her husband made several attempts to undress her before they married, and how, on their wedding night, she was completely frigid. Finding that his wife hated sex, he began an affair with another woman. And in the earlier book, Eve is charitable enough to admit that it must have been difficult for him to marry a psalm-singing Bible-quoter when his tastes ran to whiskey and blondes. In this latest one, she describes him as sullen, selfish and bad tempered, and manages to remove all the blame from herself.

As their marriage deteriorated, Eve Black began to reappear, getting inside Eve

White's head and telling her to throw things at her husband or otherwise defy him. She began doing precisely that. And finally, after she had looped a blind cord round her daughter's neck, he persuaded her to go and see a doctor. This is the point at which *The Three Faces of Eve* begins—with the demure housewife who hears voices inside her head, and has blackouts during which she behaves thoroughly badly. Then, as the psychiatrist (Thigpen) was questioning her one day, she began to writhe with a splitting headache, and

The book implied she was cured

closed her eyes. Suddenly a completely different girl—Eve Black—was sitting in the chair smiling seductively at the startled doctor, and asking for a cigarette.

This was the beginning of Eve White's real problems. Her marriage broke up; Eve Black began taking over and living her own life. Eve White—a prudish teetotaler—would “come to” at a party, sitting opposite a drunken Romeo who was trying to persuade her to get into bed, and when she stood up, her legs would collapse from the effect of the alcohol she had absorbed. As in many similar cases, her *alter-ego* took malicious pleasure in landing her in such situations.

The next major event in her life was

when her doctors decided to write a book about the case—*The Three Faces of Eve*. It is clear that Eve's own attitude to this is highly ambiguous. She made a certain amount of money from articles about her—a few thousand dollars—but it was the doctors who cleaned up with a best-seller and movie rights. Eve obviously remained grateful to Thigpen for his help, but was resentful about all the money and fame that he was making out of her sufferings, while she remained anonymous. She was particularly irritated because the book, like the movie, implies that she is cured and is now living happily ever after, when in fact she was completely uncured.

By this time, a third personality—who called herself Jane—had emerged. She seemed much more balanced and mature than either of the two Eves. (This again is a common phenomenon in such cases—the emergence of a kind of “elder sister” character who seems more grown up than the original patient.) It was Jane who met and married a kindly and protective man called Don Sizemore, and who went on to write the book *Strangers in My Body* (still under a pseudonym). For a while, it looked as if Jane was going to take over completely, but the usual problems began to arise. Eve felt insecure because they lived in a mobile home (Don's job involved moving around), and the old complications started all over again. There were more children, more suicide attempts, more jobs lost because of wayward *alter-*

egos, and finally a whole host of new personalities, who sometimes emerged two at a time.

Finally, in collaboration with her cousin, Eve decides to write her story once again. As a result, she claims, she is now definitely cured. I personally find this very difficult to believe. I read the book last year in its original hard cover edition; and when the editors sent me the paperback for review, the first thing I did was to turn to the end to see if there was a new postscript describing further complications. There isn't; but I still suspect there ought to be.

For "Eve's" sake, I am delighted that her new book has been a financial success. But I must immediately qualify that by saying that I personally found it less interesting than either *The Three Faces of Eve* or *Strangers in My Body*. To begin with, it is far too long. The account of her childhood – told in the third person – reads like an autobiographical novel; but it is a novel in which not nearly enough takes place. I personally have no desire to be taken step by step through her childhood: "Christine almost never played during the day at her own house, since she left with her mother early each morning and went down to Granny's. . . . A good editor could – and should – have reduced the first 200 pages of the book down to 20. The only thing that emerges from this long account is that Eve has a great capacity for self pity ("her eyes filled with tears of rage . . ."), and that she regards her problems as infinitely fascinating.

All this had the effect of making me thoroughly impatient long before the interesting part of the book – her treatment under Thigpen – begins. And although I found her account of her personality changes fascinating, I also found myself running out of sympathy long before the end, and feeling that Eve is rather an idiot and a bore. The section on all the new personalities – the Strawberry girl, the Purple lady, the banana split lady, etc – is too brief, too uninformative, and simply fails to make an impact after all the incredible complications and tribulations of the first half of the book.

Having said all of which, I still have to admit that this is a very remarkable story indeed. How, for example, can orthodox medicine account for the astonishing fact

the Eve Black was allergic to nylon – it brought her legs out in blotches – and that Eve White wasn't – the blotches promptly vanished the moment Eve White took over? Or that when one personality was being put to sleep with an injection of anaesthetic, another one suddenly took over who was completely unaffected by it? If it was the same body, why didn't it always have the same reactions?

Unfortunately, there is no space here for me to even attempt to sketch out my own answer to the various problems – I have attempted to, at considerable length, in my book *Mysteries*. Yet what *does* seem clear is that we have to somehow revise our whole notion of the structure of personality.

No doubt Clifford Allen is correct when

. . . the brain and the body are the puppet and the 'ego' is the puppet master

he says that such cases involve an element of play acting. Chris Sizemore practically admits as much herself, when she says (of her childhood): "Life was a game to be played, and Christine was all the actors." And she begins the book by saying that now she has written it, she feels frightened because "there is no place for me to go now" – which clearly implies that all the personalities *were* some strange form of escapism. Yet when all this is taken into account, the great problem remains. What mechanism can completely eclipse someone's normal ego, and replace it with a different person? Not another *aspect* of the same person – a different person. (Many doctors who have recorded such cases mention that they could instantly *see* when a new personality had taken over the body – the face would change completely.)

There are other interesting questions. Chris Sizemore, like many other cases of multiple personality, seemed to develop certain powers of extra-sensory perception as a by-product of her problems. She tells how, when she was nine, she took her small sister in the woods looking for "swamp juice" (rain water in a hollow log)

to get rid of freckles, and how her sister fell in the creek and had to go to bed with a sore throat. In the night, Eve dreamed that Jesus came and told her that her sister had diphtheria. She told her parents at breakfast; a doctor came and confirmed that it was diphtheria. A serum was sent for from a hundred miles away, and the child's life was saved.

Later in life, she had many such experiences. She had a premonition that her husband would be electrocuted at work, and persuaded him to stay home; the man who replaced him on the job was electrocuted. When her child was about to be vaccinated, she tried to prevent it, saying it would harm her. She was overruled, and the child almost died of a spoiled lot of vaccine. One day she had a premonition that her cousin – hundreds of miles away – was ill, and phoned her home; her cousin, in fact, was seriously ill with meningitis. "Eve" sent her a message! "I will you to get well", and then posted a letter telling her she would be all right. By the time the letter arrived, the crisis had passed and her cousin had started to recover.

The problem, at the moment, is our more-or-less mechanistic view of the personality. Clifford Allen writes "It must be remembered that consciousness is composed of an assembly of reaction, and is *not* a mysterious ethereal substance."

That is to say, personality is basically your body and your brain, and their responses to the environment. In which case, how can we explain the total change that occurs in such cases when a new personality takes over the body?

The alternative view would seem to be that the "I" is an independent "spirit", which takes over the body like a driver getting into a car; and I agree that this is just as puzzling and unsatisfactory. Probably the truth lies somewhere between the two views. Yet I feel that, wherever it lies, we shall have to replace the old mechanical models with a model in which the brain and body are the puppet, and the "ego" is the puppet master.

Meanwhile, books like *Sybil* and *Eve* remind us that Freud's sexual theory and Watson's Behaviourism leave the basic problem untouched, and that the sooner we recognise this, the sooner we shall begin making some headway against the most baffling problem in the field of clinical psychopathology.

(*Eve*, by Chris Costner Sizemore and Elen Sain Pittillo, is published by Pan Books (paperback) at £1.20).

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Why experimenters upset results

Matthew Manning has been tested by many researchers and a pattern has emerged – not in this English psychic's results but in the apparent influence each investigator has on them. This is how he interprets the experimenter effect. . . .

I TOOK part in a series of experiments with Dr William Braud in January 1978, at the Mind Science Foundation in San Antonio, Texas.¹ Over three weeks I participated in five different tests, four of which produced results that were, by standards of orthodox scientific evaluation, significant. The fifth test yielded "significant psi-missing"; in other words, the results were so bad that they were in themselves significant.

Interestingly, this was an experiment which I particularly disliked, probably because I had difficulty in visualising what I was intended to do. It is unusual that I achieve such consistency, but I have noticed that there are some experimenters with whom I have produced a succession of good results.

During one experiment in particular I obtained highly significant results which beat chance by odds of about 100,000 to one. In order to account for my results by chance alone we would have had to run the experiment 100,000 times. In this test, human blood cells were placed in a weak saline solution that caused them to die. When blood is placed in salt water the cells expand until they burst open, spilling the haemoglobin contained in them out into the water, causing the cell to die. As they break down, the cells allow more light to pass through them, providing the researchers with a measure of the rate of decay. During the test, which ran over 50 trials, the light passing through the cells was measured by a machine while I attempted to heal or protect the cells in the saline solution. During a control series of 50 trials the same procedure was repeated but without my influence.

"By concentrating his mind on the test tube of blood, Matthew was able to slow down the death of the cells. Normally the blood cells would break down and die within a maximum of five minutes. But he was able to slow down the destruction so that the blood cells were still intact as long as 20 minutes later," said Dr Braud.²

Later in the year I participated in a further series of tests in London with the Society for Psychical Research and we twice attempted to replicate the results of the blood cell experiment. Despite the remarkable results I achieved in Texas I was unable to repeat them in London. The circumstances of the test were the same; the only difference was the experimenter. This time the test was conducted by Professor William Byers-Brown and I

cannot honestly say that there was the same rapport between us as there had been when I was working with William Braud. Other experiments conducted at the same time by other SPR investigators produced results that were generally successful, suggesting that my failure on the blood cell test was not due necessarily to my lack of ability at that time.

I have since made a list of every experiment in which I participated during a two-year period from May, 1977. It produced some interesting facts and figures from which I think both experimenters and subjects could learn.

Of 32 tests in which I was involved, 17 were deemed by the experimenters to be successful in some degree. All these experiments fell into two general



Matthew Manning.

categories: my psychokinetic influence over (a) physical or (b) biological targets or systems. The physical targets included random number generators and various electrical gadgetry; out of 14 such "targets" I was successful in only three tests, giving me a 21% success rate. The biological "targets" included seeds, fish, humans, and mould samples; in 18 such experiments I was successful on 14 occasions in producing a significant result, giving me a 77% success rate.

However, of far greater interest is the analysis I made of the principal experimenter in each test. There were certain scientists with whom I achieved consistently good results and others with whom I seemed unable to do anything, even if I had previously been successful at the same experiment with other researchers.

At the University of California, Professor John Jungerman attempted four

different experiments with me, none of which was successful; Professor David Deamer was involved also in four tests, only one of which produced any results. I worked with Professor Fred Lorenz on three different experiments and each one produced results.

I cannot find any common characteristic or trait in the experimenters involved in unsuccessful tests except that in the majority of cases (Jungerman, Deamer, Byers-Brown) it seems that the experiments they conducted with me were amongst the first they had ever made in this area of research.

The most interesting category of researcher is that which falls between the "successful" and "unsuccessful". Typically, such an experimenter rarely gets any results with me during the course of the actual experiment. However, a paranormal event of a spontaneous nature unrelated to the test often occurs, usually in another part of the room and often shortly after the experiment. For example, whilst working in California with Ron Hawke and John Jungerman I had tried very hard one morning to alter the temperature inside a sealed container:

"Although no temperature changes were evident, there were repeated indications of unusual electrical field activity in the target area. At noon, when the session adjourned for lunch, the experimenters walked together to the elevator. Matthew entered first and, by pressing the appropriate button, held the doors open for the additional passengers. Approximately 15 seconds later the emergency bell rang, signalling that the elevator was jammed. No one could correct the malfunction immediately and everyone walked down the stairs to the main floor. After lunch the elevator was working properly again. John Jungerman, a regular user of the elevator for the past eight years, was unaware of any similar malfunction before or since that afternoon."³

I wonder if such researchers are unconsciously apprehensive of obtaining positive results for fear of the reaction of colleagues, for example? But they still want or need *something* to happen. When such spontaneous phenomena (or what I call spin-off effects) occur, they can easily be dismissed by sceptical colleagues as "coincidence", "trickery" or "imagination". Results produced under tightly-

contd. on p.22.

Amityville: an even stranger story

The best-selling book 'The Amityville Horror' is said to be a true story. But, as Melvin Harris reveals, the account of strange and frightening phenomena at a Long Island house has grown with the telling . . .

THOSE who are enthralled by "The Exorcist" and other films of that type will find that *The Amityville Horror*, a best-seller in America, has an immense appeal. So it's not too surprising to find that one of the writers of the book is Jay Anson – the man who actually wrote the script of "The Exorcist." But, unlike "The Exorcist," his book is presented as a "strictly accurate" account. It chronicles the 28 days spent by the Lutz family in Long Island house that had witnessed six murders. In that short time they endured demons, levitations, poltergeists, personality changes, phantom voices and so on! And the paperback cover trumpets that their tale is "more hideously frightening than 'The Exorcist' because it actually happened!" But did it?

As Anita Gregory has put it (*Alpha* No. 2), "there is not the slightest reason contained within its covers why anyone should believe one word of it . . ." Even so, there are many readers who'll be taken in by this book. Yet there is plenty of evidence which shows unambiguously that the Amityville story is highly embroidered.

For a start, take the account published in the *Long Island Press* on January 17, 1976. In this article, George Lutz sets out his experiences at 112 Ocean Avenue. His story centres around things that were "sensed" and not seen. In fact, he contradicts earlier stories about "flying objects," moving couches" and "wailing noises." The only physical phenomena mentioned concerns a window which opened of its own accord. (Later investigations showed that the counter-weights in the window were simply too heavy.) So, at that date, the Amityville happenings were tame, purely subjective and hardly worth noticing.

Just over a year later, though, George Lutz came up with a new version of the events. He told it to journalist Paul Hoffman and it appeared in the April, 1977, issue of *Good Housekeeping* (USA). It's worth studying in detail, for it shows just how the whole tale was embroidered. What's more, it contradicts his earlier account and it's in conflict with the 1978 book *as well*.

In *Good Housekeeping* the story begins with a Roman Catholic priest blessing the house. On leaving, he warns the Lutzes about one of their bedrooms, saying, "Don't let anyone sleep in there. Keep the door closed. Spend as little time as possible

in there." But in the book the priest, called "Father Mancuso," does nothing of the sort! His alleged advice about not using the room, is given *one week after* the blessing! And then, *only* after a whole series of nasty events.

The next person to be affected by the house is said to be Kathy Lutz's aunt. She was described in the magazine as "a normally placid ex-nun". But when she came to visit, she behaved quite out of character. She became hostile towards George, who says she "sat there and cut me down for three hours". In the book, though, (p.65) this event is reshaped to make it more dramatic, for the aunt can only stand the house for a very short while. There's no three-hour harangue – she simply inspects the house, refuses to enter certain rooms, and leaves. In fact, she "... hadn't been in the house for more than a half-hour when she decided it was time to go". And go she did! Quite a difference you'll agree.

You'll find this same re-vamping technique used with the "old crone" incident. In *Good Housekeeping* George states that on Saturday, January 10, 1976, he woke up at night "with a compulsion to flee the house". He yelled at his wife and shook her, but just couldn't wake her up. And then, as he watched, his sleeping wife "turned into a 90-year-old woman". Her hair became "old and dirty", she dribbled and creases and crow's feet formed on her face. "It took several hours before she returned to her normal self."

When this story appears in the book (p.124-5), however, it contains major differences. To begin with, it's placed four days *earlier*, on Wednesday, January 7. And George *doesn't* wake up wanting to flee the house. On the contrary, he's unable to get to sleep at all. And in this wide-awake state, he has the urge to go out to the local tavern for a beer. He doesn't shake or yell at his wife, for when he turns to speak to her, he finds her levitating "almost a foot above him". He pulls her down to the bed, where she wakes. And it's then, while *awake*, that she turns into a 90-year-old woman! But this state only lasts *for a minute or so* – not several hours.

Now, in the book, this levitation is the second that is alleged to have happened. The first, had "taken place" three days earlier and then Kathy floated "two feet above the bed." (p.110). (Kathy, I should add, knew nothing about these levitations

until told by George.) Yet another levitation happens on January 15, only *this* time, both Kathy and George float around at the same time (p.179). But, note well, *nothing* was ever said about these remarkable levitations in the *Good Housekeeping* account. The only claim, there, is that on January 11 George "awoke to find Kathy *sliding across the bed*, as if by levitation" (my emphasis), which is very different from the "floating in the air" claims. It also involves a different date.

Another event that becomes transformed, involves a young couple who visit the house. In the magazine account they arrive and experience a turbulence in the house "like an elephant rolling over in its sleep". After this, the man examines the house and explains that it is "haunted by the earthbound spirits of those who had died in their sleep and didn't know they were dead."

In the book there's no mention of these elephantine noises. The incident is placed five days earlier, and the man takes no part *at all* in the theorising. Instead, it's *the girl* who has all the bright and spooky ideas. She even lapses into a trance and speaks with a man's voice – "Father Mancuso's" voice in fact. This particular evening ends with George finding one of the stair bannisters wrenched from its moorings.

But wrenched off bannisters are just one of the minor annoyances in the book. The real horrors, there, are the visitations by the "gigantic hooded figure in white" (p.174), who's also described as a "demon with horns" with half its face shot away (p.87-8). Yet in *Good Housekeeping* there's *not even a hint of these visits!* There is mention, though, of Kathy turning white and stating, "I just saw some eyes at the window." These are described as "red, beady eyes", but we're not told whose eyes they were. And that's the end of the incident. Yet, when this story reaches the book, it becomes a point of high drama, set in a second-story bedroom at night.

The Lutzes' young daughter points to a window and both George and Kathy see "... two fiery, red eyes! No face, just the mean, little eyes of a pig" looking in. Then Kathy rushes at the window "screaming in an unearthly voice". She smashes the glass with a chair and then they hear an "animal cry of pain, a loud squealing – and the eyes were gone!" This squealing goes on for a



The Amityville Horror house on the night the six DeFeo victims were found.

while, out in the grounds of the house. But George doesn't go looking for the flying pig; instead, he comforts his wife, who sobs out, "It's been here all the time! I wanted to kill it! I wanted to kill it!" Now, I think you'll agree, that the story has undergone a most remarkable transformation. And it's the same with event after event in the book.

Take the "marching band" incidents as a further example. George Lutz states that on four occasions (pp. 110, 116, 173, 164) the house was shaken by the sounds of a band marching through it, with at least 50 musicians parading around", he claims. But no one else ever heard this din. And George himself never mentioned it in the magazine account. All he spoke of, then, were unspecified "strange noises" which he accepted "as natural" at first.

Finally, the many claims that the house was paranoimally damaged—locks shattered, doors torn off hinges, etc, were never mentioned before the book arrived. The only damage referred to in *Good Housekeeping* was limited to stains on bathroom fixtures and doors.

So the earlier accounts suggest clearly that the book has been substantially changed. But, for those who might still have some lingering doubts, let me give you a little of the most damning evidence

of all. I take it from the investigation carried out last year by Rick Moran and Peter Jordan (see *Fate*, May 1978).

They went to Amityville and interviewed people mentioned in the book. The results were startling. The police rejected the book's claim that they had investigated the house. In particular, Sgt. Cammorato denied that he'd ever entered the house while the Lutzes were in residence. Yet the book has Cammorato touring through the house and even inspecting "the secret room" in the basement. Tales that turn out to be so much eyewash.

Then "Father Mancuso," who is featured throughout the book also flatly denied that he'd ever entered the Lutzes' home! So that tale about his blessing the building and about the phantom voice that ordered him out (p.25) is quite bogus. As well as that, the pastor of the Sacred Heart Rectory dismissed as "pure and utter nonsense" the Lutzes' tale of "an unrelenting, disgusting odour that permeated the Rectory". This alleged "Scent of the Devil" was supposed to have driven the priests out of their building, but this too is strongly denied.

In fact, little in the book stood up to close scrutiny. Local repairmen and locksmiths knew nothing of the damages they were supposed to have rectified. Not

even the story that the Lutzes' were driven out of the house by the hauntings stood up. The real reasons for their exit were much more prosaic—a cash crisis and a near-breakdown.

So what sparked the whole thing off? Well, without a confession from George we'll never have a *complete* answer. But we do know that George Lutz was a man with problems. When his first marriage broke up, he tried group therapy, then he turned to Transcendental Meditation. His second marriage seemed to help for a while, but even that brought along its own problems.

And *before* he moved into Amityville he was already facing a crisis. The two boys had tried to run away. His business was in difficulties. The Internal Revenue people were acting tough. And to crown it all, he became completely irresponsible. Instead of cutting back on expenditure, he decided to buy a house that was way above his means.

Once in the new house matters came to a head fast. He grew so apathetic that, for a while, he didn't even leave home to go to the office. He even lists his problems, in the book, (p.30). They were "... a second marriage with two children, a new house with a big mortgage . . . taxes in Amityville three times higher than in Deer Park. Did he really need that new speedboat? How the hell was he going to pay for all of this? The construction business was lousy on Long Island . . . so who the hell needs a land surveyor?" And before long, "He was beginning to choke with the pressure of mounting bills for the house . . . and for the office where he would shortly have a very serious payroll deficit" (p.82).

All this turmoil soon took its toll. He began to blame his inertia, his bad temper and his worries *on the house*. When he was short with his employees, or when he hit the children, it became the fault of the house and not his lack of control. And in that frame of mind, George Lutz began to identify with Ronald DeFeo—the murderer who'd lived in the house. He even became convinced that he was the physical double of Ronald.

When he first saw Ronald's picture he recorded that, "the bearded twenty-four-year-old face staring back . . . could have been his own!" (p.78). And if a physical double, why not a mental double? I don't doubt that George felt murderous black thoughts in that house, but they came from his own plight and deep frustrations, not from any supernatural agencies. That house and its reputation, served as nothing more than a catalyst for morbid ideas.

But after his exit from Amityville, his imaginings started to grow out of control. The meeting with Anson finalised this process and the many thoughts were crystallised and put into a sensational and saleable form. Even so, the tale only sells by posing *as truth*. As fiction, I doubt if it would have covered its printing costs.

But I don't regret buying it, since I like a good story. I am sorry, though, for the many uninformed people who'll be taken in by this yarn, and who will most likely end up quoting it!

Boosting UFOs' credibility rating

Hard facts and data are the only things that will persuade the scientific community to take UFOs seriously, believes Dr J. Allen Hynek. David Harvey found out what he was doing to make the study of the phenomenon more professional.

"THERE'S NO doubt that the US Air Force has not played clean pool with the public. There's not a Machiavellian plot, perhaps, but the UFO reports have been played down."

Few people are in a better position to know about official cover-ups than astronomer Dr J. Allen Hynek who was, for 20 years, scientific consultant to Project Blue Book, the American Air Force's investigation into the UFO phenomenon. One of the longest-running suspicions of investigators has been that governments know far more than they let on. Dr Hynek believes that there has not been a cover-up in the States so much as a public-relations inspired hush-up. "They didn't want people to get alarmed about the extent of the reports."

If the American government does know the secret truth, then it is well guarded. But he implies that the real state of affairs is probably more mundane: that government officials have no more idea than anyone else as to what is at the bottom of the UFO mystery.

It was to produce some answers and inject some professionalism into the study of the phenomenon that Dr Hynek set up the Centre for UFO Studies in 1973. His aim is to inspire the scientific community to take the subject seriously. As Jimmy Carter found, a request from no less a person than the President foundered on the basic problem of adequate data. "NASA said that they couldn't do anything because they had no facts to work on," says Dr Hynek. Perhaps they will have in the near future.

Already the Centre has accumulated over 75,000 reports from 133 countries in its data banks. "That shows the global nature of the phenomenon," says Dr Hynek. Yet, as he is ready to admit, many of the reports he receives do not stand up to close scrutiny. The Centre is linked to 7,000 police stations by a hot-line network so that people can log their reports direct. "We get three to four calls a day, but most of them turn out to be IFOs. People have to be fairly frightened before they phone the police. But they get upset by the damndest things, even sky writing."

More promising cases are followed up by Allen Hendry, the Centre's full-time investigator, who has recently published



"UFOs seem to be isolated in space and time" – Dr Hynek.

The UFO Handbook (Doubleday/Dolphin) in the States, which clearly illustrates the multitude of circumstances that can lead to mistaken impressions, as well as reviewing the more puzzling UFO evidence. "It will probably be taken by enthusiasts to be a debunking book," says Dr Hynek. "But it's not, it's just cautious."

Although the fully-fledged interest of the scientific world has yet to be won, he claims that many individuals, including those in establishments such as NASA, Oakridge, Los Alamos and other hot-beds of research, are poised to give their support. A first step towards a more professional treatment of the subject is the publication of a *Journal of UFO Studies*, a twice-yearly venture, which made its debut this autumn. It contains papers by scientists, established in their own disciplines, on various aspects of the subject. One paper, for example, examines the use of hypnotism as a means of obtaining details of UFO observations from witnesses. Dr Hynek hopes this new venture will help to woo other scientists.

At present, his own conclusions about the whole phenomenon are tentative. "The subject has turned out to be more complex than was originally thought. If I was to be dogmatic about it, people would pounce on me." He goes as far as to say that there is "certainly a paranormal aspect. Many reports have involved cases of

materialisation and dematerialisation."

As to what the phenomenon actually is, he reserves judgment. "I think there's an interesting parallel with physics. We know light can be both a wave and a particle. You have got the same thing with UFOs. They seem to have a dual nature. There is physical evidence: radar blips, holes and burns appear on the ground, noise and so on, and there is a paranormal aspect. UFOs come and go. Sightings rarely last more than five to ten minutes. It's what I call a Cheshire Cat effect. If a plane takes off from one point and travels to another, you can observe it all the way along its route. It doesn't work like that with UFOs. They seem to be isolated in space and time. You won't see the UFO that was there last night in the morning."

Because of the notoriously difficult problem of pinning down and validating UFO sightings, Dr Hynek was reluctant to cite any one case as best evidence. "But if I was to go before a scientific body and had to produce cases, I would choose some of the day-light disc reports, or the New Zealand film, rather than the more spectacular cases. For one thing, they do not impugn your sanity. It's quite a different story when someone says they looked out of the window and saw a craft land in their garden."

Fear of being laughed at, or utter confusion about what they have witnessed, cause many to keep quiet about their experiences, he believes. "For every case reported there are probably 10 that we never hear about." Dr Hynek's impression is that people only volunteer information when they feel it is safe to do so. He has learnt this from the aftermath of his lectures and earlier, when checking US Air Force cases, he found that experiences would come to light from unexpected quarters. "If it were socially acceptable for people to come out and talk, there would be a tidal wave of reports". As it is, many hold their counsel and swell the ranks of what he calls the "league of the bewildered silent."

Until that change of public opinion occurs, a great number of sightings will never be revealed, it seems. However, a steady trickle does seem to reach the newspapers and other media. In the absence of an official investigative body,

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The mystery of the camera-shy ghost

Why is it that such well-attested phenomena as apparitions and poltergeists seldom occur when a camera is pointing in their direction? Hilary Evans discusses the pictorial evidence for the paranormal and how it might be improved.

WHAT does a ghost look like when nobody is looking at it? You may say, that's begging the question. Do we even know that ghosts *exist* when nobody is looking at them – aren't they probably figments of our imagination anyway? Well, that is precisely what the camera can help us to establish. There are a sufficient number of cases where apparitions have been seen by more than one witness, and/or on more than one occasion, for us to feel fairly confident that they have some kind of reality, even if they are no more "there" than a hologram is there.

But it would be a lot more comforting if our belief could be confirmed by the camera which possesses no imagination and could not engender a figment if it tried. Eye-witness testimony to an apparition or a UFO, to Bigfoot or Nessie, may carry sufficient weight to convince the witness himself; but if he wants to convince others – and what witness doesn't? – nothing beats a good clear photograph.

It does not follow, of course, that a photograph is conclusive evidence in itself. A camera cannot lie of its own accord, but it can be made to lie. We shall want to check the credentials of the man who presses the button. But at least he will have given us a hostage for his good faith, something we can take away and subject to laboratory analysis.

This is why visual documentation of the paranormal is of special fascination. It is also why the continued failure to come up with convincing visual proof is so disappointing to those who have convinced themselves of the reality of phenomena, and so gratifying to those sceptics who have not as yet found – and perhaps wish *not* to find – any human testimony they can accept. Indeed, the camera-shyness of paranormal phenomena is so remarkable that some have discerned in it a paranormal phenomenon in its own right.

Admirers of Paul Jennings will recall his brilliant exposition of the philosophy of Resistentialism (in *Oddly Enough*, 1950), whose pivotal dogma is encapsulated in Pierre-Marie Ventre's phrase "Les choses sont contre nous" ("Things are against us"), a world-view confirmed by the Clark-Trimble experiments with toast and marmalade dropped onto carpets of various grades. (Tests demonstrated that the more expensive the carpet, the higher the marmalade-downwards incidence.)

Some have seen, in the history of visual documentation of the paranormal, resistentialism at its most persistently hostile.

How many UFO percipients, even experienced professionals, find that when they photograph their UFO they have forgotten to load the camera or wind on the film? Dedicated watchers of Loch Ness quit their posts for a brief break – at which moment Nessie chooses to surface (see F. W. Holiday, *The Dragon & the Disc*, 1973). The apparition makes its appearance in The Haunted Chamber – and the flashlight fails to flash though subsequent analysis discloses no defect. . .

Some of an occult turn of mind subscribe to the doctrine that "there are

common, some kind of barrier effect – perhaps that "electromagnetic effect" which is today being trotted out as a catch-all answer to baffling problems ranging from UFO car-stop cases (superbly analysed in BUFORA's recent report) to telekinesis (as formerly posited by John Taylor in *Superminds* before his failure to crack the problem led him to state that the problem didn't even exist, surely the perfect paradigm of Aesop's fable of the Fox and the Grapes?).

Well, all things are possible, and perhaps Kodak's back-room boys are even at this moment working on a camera film which will not be affected by EM radiation. Until then, we shall have to make do with what we've got. And if, instead of sulking over the inability of visual documents to give us the solid proof we crave, we look to see what they *do* give us, we shall find that they are indeed a very positive source of unique information.

Who was there and where they were

We have all seen those pictures of Russian parades from which former VIPs, subsequently condemned to oblivion for ideological reasons, have been carefully removed. So we know that any photograph can be doctored. But only to a limited degree; and usually the motive is obvious. Besides, the original may well be still floating around, so someone's face is apt to look a bit red when the comparison is made.

By and large, if you see a photograph of the experimental set-up for an ESP test or a seance, the record is likely to be reliable. For example, a photograph of one of Eusapia Palladino's seances from the early 1900s will inform us accurately who was present, and who was sitting where, and what sort of control was or was not possible – all things which could have been mistakenly presented in a verbal report, which might easily have omitted the name of one of the witnesses or mistakenly said that A was on B's right, not his left. On this low level, at least, the visual record is invaluable: and it achieves something more, and less definable, by giving us an impression of the "feel" of the occasion, it sets the scene for us and brings the written transcript to life.

Often, of course, the camera can do more than that. If we are fortunate, it will have recorded some of the phenomena as well. A few of the earlier investigators recognised the unique contribution that the



Artist's impression of the housemaid who preceded Kathleen Leigh Hunt up the stairs of Hyde Park Place, London, in 1884 – only to vanish on the landing.

some things we are not meant to know" from which it is an easy step to "there are some things we are not meant to record", presumably including George Adamski's UFO visitors and the ghost of Raynham Hall. On film we get only amorphous blurs, whereas the verbal description is full of sharp detail: in such cases we have to ask ourselves which is most likely to be at fault, the camera or the author of the verbal description.

Others seek a scientific explanation. Could it be that there is one characteristic which all paranormal phenomena have in

camera could make: thus Schrenck-Notzing recorded his seances with Marthe Beraud in hundreds of photographs to give us a unique legacy of documentation of the golden age of physical mediumship—an era which now seems to have passed for ever. Where are the flying furniture and airborne tambourines of yesteryear? Whatever—as Mary Rose Barrington plaintively inquired at a recent Society for Psychical Research lecture—happened to ectoplasm?

That whole amazing era of psychical research might be even more forgotten than it is, without the photographic evidence. Even so, only a tiny part of the

we are reduced to artists' drawings, made sometimes by the witness himself, sometimes by an artist working to the witness' instructions. Either way, the pitfalls are obvious and the evidential value slim.

However, consider an analogy: imagine a naturalist, sailing the Amazon with an exploring party. Suddenly, just as all his companions happen to be looking another way, he catches a momentary glimpse of a bird totally unknown to him. Is he justified in making a sketch of what he thought he saw? Surely we would all unhesitatingly answer "yes" to that; in which case, we should also be willing to accept an artist's drawing of the old lady bending over the child's cot in Mrs Toomey's cottage (see Peter Moss's strongly recommended book *Ghosts over Britain*, 1977). Such a drawing may not convince us that the apparition ever existed, but it does tell us what the witness thought she saw, which means that we all know we're talking about roughly the same thing.

It will, indeed, often be the case that a picture will tell us more about the state of mind of the witness than about the phenomenon itself. An old wood engraving of a witch or a banshee, for example, reflects the preconceptions of the period when it was made and record traditional beliefs rather than specific sightings. Consequently we should not think of treating them as reliable sources of information for what actually took place at a witches' sabbat, or what the country folk of Ireland are reported as seeing, but we can accept them as indications of how such phenomena were conceived of by contemporaries.

Chronicling a craze

Few events can have made so much difference to popular attitudes to world happenings as the launch, in the early 1840s, of the illustrated newspaper. The impact of the *Illustrated London News*, and its imitators in France, Germany and elsewhere, was enormous: for the first time ordinary people, unable to travel themselves, could see events, places and people depicted, in popular journals which they could afford to buy, or at any rate read in libraries. The result was to enable people to relate far more closely to what was going on in the world outside their narrow immediate environment—it was, if you like, the first half of the cultural revolution which was completed by the universal availability of television.

By coincidence, there was an outbreak of poltergeist phenomena in France during the same decade that saw the birth of the pictorial press. There was nothing new about the phenomena—such goings-on as flying stones and upturned furniture, had been reported for centuries. But what was new was the intellectual climate in which they occurred: the public was now in a state of mind to demand a scientific explanation, not just a titillating account, of these wonders. So, for the first time the paranormal was chronicled with a degree of objectivity; and when, at the end of that same decade, the revelations of the Fox

sisters in America led, for better or worse, to the birth of Spiritualism, the popular media were there ready to tell people what was going on, in a way that had never been possible before. The bizarre marvels of the seance room were widely reported in the press—and as widely ridiculed; the important thing is that, for the first time, they were reported in pictures as well as words.

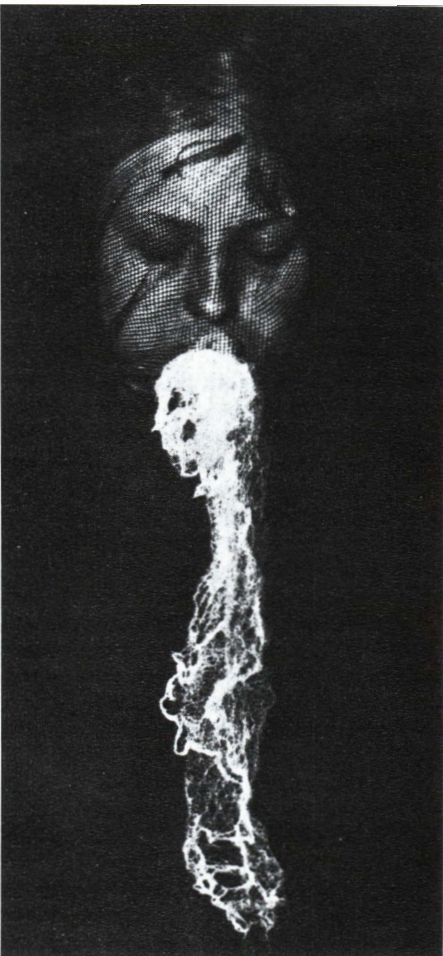
From then on we see a steady build-up of visual documentation. The recently-discovered technique of photography was rapidly exploited. Unfortunately the most enthusiastic exploiters were the spirit photographers, who conceived the bizarre notion that when they photographed a sitter, a medium might cause a spirit to manifest when the plate was developed. The notion may seem preposterous to us, but it was taken very seriously by the Spiritualists of the day, who were—understandably—anxious to give the spirits every opportunity of communicating. Belief in the phenomenon was so strong that when, in 1875, the most eminent practitioner of the art, Buguet of Paris, was detected in flagrant cheating, many of his patrons refused to accept the evidence and maintained their trust in him. Indeed, though it has been exposed time and time again, spirit photography continued until comparatively recent times—one of the more bizarre manifestations of a bizarre movement.

Too, too solid flesh

Probably the most dramatic photographs of the paranormal ever taken were those made more than 100 years ago under the direction of William Crookes, recording his sessions with Florence Cook, who claimed to act as a medium for the spirit of Katie King. Photographs taken at the sessions by flashlight show a fully materialised young lady, often in direct contact with members of the audience, and sometimes in the same picture as the medium herself. We have Crookes' word for the authenticity of these pictures, and to the end of his life he never retracted his affidavit. Nevertheless, one must wonder what caused him, in the end, to destroy all the originals, so that all we have are such copies as were already in circulation? Moreover, it is, alas, a fact beyond dispute that some of Florence Cook's later seances were fraudulent. Sir George Sitwell (Edith's father) and a Mr Van Buch became suspicious when they found that the materialised spirit, though alleged to be only 12 years old, was wearing a corset. They made an ungentlemanly grab, and found that medium and spirit were one. That doesn't necessarily mean that the Crookes photos are phoney, but it doesn't exactly buttress our belief in them.

More convincing are the photographs taken during Ochorowicz's 1910 experiments with the Polish medium Stanislaw Tomczyk, who was later to marry the eminent SPR investigator Everard Feilding. In one of the photographs Ochorowicz is seen right at the medium's elbow as she raises a pair of scissors from the table with her telekinetic

Whatever happened to ectoplasm?



Stanislaw P., a subject of Baron Schrenck-Notzing's research, produces ectoplasm through a net at München in 1913.

phenomena received this kind of visual documentation. And when it is a matter of spontaneous rather than experimental phenomena, there is virtually nothing.

This is hardly surprising. Apparitions do not appear to order, and when they do it is generally in the dark. Poltergeists, in particular, prefer to do their thing when human backs and eyes are turned, and their activities are so erratic that no investigator has yet found a means of effecting continuous camera surveillance. For spontaneous phenomena, therefore,

Why were originals destroyed?



"Katie King" materialises (right) for Dr Gully of Malvern at the home of scientist William Crookes in 1874. Crookes destroyed the originals before his death. Six years after the photograph was taken, Sir George Sitwell and Mr van Buch reveal (above) that, on this occasion at least, the part of Katie King is being played by the accomplished Florrie Cook.



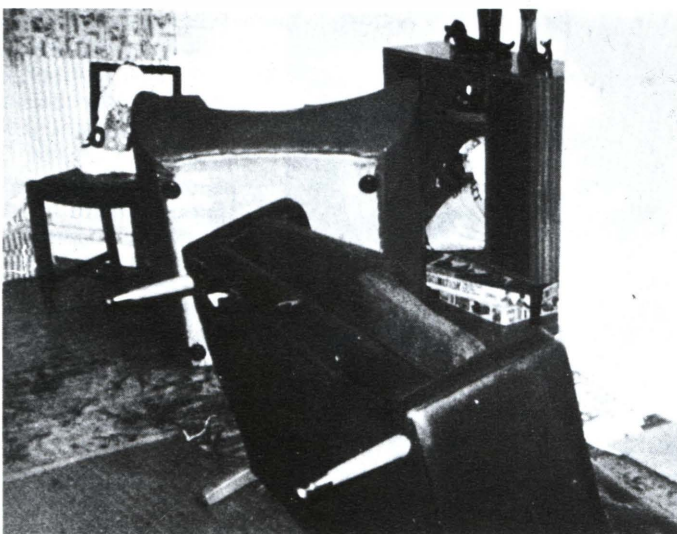
Catching spirits in camera



Before he took his spirit photographs, Buguet of Paris had to be cleared of "mauvaises fluides" by a medium, while his sitter watched apprehensively. Right, a typical Buguet photo from circa 1874.



The elusive poltergeist



Classic poltergeist phenomena centred on 14-year-old Adolphine Benoit of Guillonville, France, in 1849 (above). Though clearly involved in some way, it was evident that she could not possibly be causing them. All that the camera is likely to see of a poltergeist's handiwork (left) is the end-result—in this case, upturned furniture at Enfield, 1977.

powers. If there was any cheating going on, he *must* have known it. If he permitted the photograph to stand as evidence, then either he was a fraud – not easy to believe in the light of his high reputation – or the phenomena are genuine, which makes them some of the most remarkable feats ever performed in full light.

And there we have, don't we, one of the most positive contributions that visual documentation can make. The camera may not prove anything on its own, but it does effectively narrow the field of possibilities – in this case, to a simple choice: genuine phenomenon or fraudulent investigator. No third possibility can reasonably be entertained.

Nor can we dodge the camera testimony in the case of another Polish medium, the astonishing Franek Kluski. On 30 August 1919, at Warsaw, he materialised a bird in the course of a carefully controlled seance. From the written record alone we might have been tempted to say, "Aha, he had it up his sleeve, didn't he?" But when we see from the photograph how big the bird is, we realise that the possibility of smuggling it into the seance room without anybody noticing is absurd. Again, we have no choice but either to assume that everyone concerned was participating in a monstrous deception, or that Kluski's bird was real. (What I want to know is, what happened to it afterwards? Typically, the report doesn't say!)

Today, investigation methods are far tighter than in the days of Tomczyk and Kluski. Moreover, today's technology puts a whole armoury of weaponry into the investigator's hands – infra red film and image enhancement cameras, video cameras and cassettes permitting playback on the domestic TV set, telescopic lenses and automatic focussing. Surely someone cares enough about solving the poltergeist enigma to set up continuous video surveillance in a room where poltergeist phenomena seem likely to occur? The cost, with erasable cassettes available, should be low enough to justify setting up such an ambush – and the results could be dramatic. Or would we find we'd forgotten to load the camera – or the tape snapped – or the lights malfunctioned just at the critical moment?

Yes, indeed, the dreaded resistentialist effect may bug our efforts: or if we are successful, the CIA or the Men In Black may step in and purloin the evidence. But it's surely worth giving it a try.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

All the illustrations and photographs in this feature have been made available by the Mary Evans Picture Library (see Page 3). The pictures of Katie King, Buguet and the Raynham Hall ghost, are from its Harry Price collection, University of London. The Enfield photograph, from its Society of Psychical Research collection, is by courtesy of L. Berger.



Two examples of photographs which appear to record paranormal effects. Above: Captain Provand's photograph of an apparition at Raynham Hall, Norfolk, in 1936. Left: Stanisława Tomczyk lifts a pair of scissors aided by her telekinetic powers, at Wisła, Poland, circa 1908, watched closely by Dr Julien Ochorowicz.

Are you at risk?

Fraud, sexual deviation and suicide are among the misfortunes that have befallen psychics and researchers. Is there a link? Leslie Price looks at the evidence and the reasons why the Church warns against probing the paranormal.

SINCE the Hydesville phenomena of 1848, when manifestations around a family named Fox gave birth to Spiritualism, the argument between Spiritualists and Christians has been constant. Perhaps the Christians attacked first, denouncing mediumship as evil, but Spiritualism has given more attention to the dispute, and most issues of Spiritualist journals have some discussion of it.

Spiritualists may charge that Christians are ignorant of psi, prejudiced, unfair, jealous, abusive and frightened of losing power. The Church is portrayed as the pathetic guardian of an exploded orthodoxy. The clergy are often seen as especially malicious because of their privileged position which they use, in general, to warn their flocks against psychic involvement.

But are the issues as clear-cut as that? Both institutional Christianity and organised Spiritualism are in decline. More dispassionate observers might find good and bad in each. Spiritualists may, indeed, point out that spirit communication occurs, and that psychical knowledge can comfort the mourner and explain much in sacred scriptures and the lives of saints. But there is also a strong case for Christians and non-Christians to steer clear of the psychic field. For obvious reasons, it is rarely set out in Spiritualist books, but it may be because this case *is* so strong (and because the Spiritualist Movement has not yet adequately responded to it) that there has been no great breakthrough of "psychic truths."

What then, can one fairly say *against* the study of the paranormal, except by experts? First, that no psychic phenomenon, even telepathy, is understood. Nothing is known for certain about ESP except that it exists. Theories abound, and it is confidently asserted, even by researchers at times, that psi works better in emotional situations, or in altered states of consciousness, and so on. Yet the evidence is inconclusive.

Not only do attempts to get the same results in the same conditions break down, but it can still be argued that not one researcher can get ESP to occur at will. One who seemed to have the knack, Dr Soal, has recently been posthumously doubted with the aid of a computer.

Some Spiritualists are sure that they can do better than scientists. Believers in psychic phenomena, it is argued, can sympathetically encourage development. Yet no Spiritualist organisation dares to spend money on the scientific study of mediumship. There are scientists with Spiritualist views, but the Movement



Leslie Price examines the chequered history of Spiritualism and psychical research.

would not dream of employing them to study the phenomena on which it is based. The setting up of a college for the advancement of psychic science at Stansted Hall, Essex, failed to change this: scientists are extremely rare on its programmes, and their visits are brief.

Without doubt, Spiritualist leaders fear what research into mediumship would show about its complex nature. They will admit that the mechanism of communication is a mystery, and even suggest that the guides are not keen for us to know it. Thus all entry into the psychic field, after 130 years of Modern Spiritualism, involves unknown forces, whose effects on mind and body are not clearly understood.

What effect does an involvement with these forces have on mediums and psychical researchers? Some come through unscathed, like Harry Edwards who was a healer into his 80s until he fell asleep after lunch and woke up, no doubt, in the spirit world. Others are less fortunate. Frank Podmore, for example, author of *Modern Spiritualism* (1902), a brilliant if over-sceptical survey, moved from support of Spiritualism, to disbelief, to sympathy again with the possibility of communication, before killing himself in 1910. His colleague, Edmund Gurney, whose main interests had been apparitions and hypnosis, was found dead in suspicious circumstances in 1888.

In 1920, Dr W. J. Crawford, who specialised in the study of a physical medium, Miss Kathleen Goligher, shot himself. Among the mediums themselves, the most gifted clairvoyant to work at the Spiritualist Association since the war, Nora Blackwood, committed suicide.

Whether these figures are statistically

significant, it is certain that mediumship, especially if ectoplasmic, involves strain. Some is due to the pressures of an uncomprehending society, some to the use of vital forces. America's greatest platform medium this century, Arthur Ford, became an alcoholic, as did that country's most controversial physical medium, Margery Crandon. English mediums from Stainton Moses to Helen Duncan have become too fond of drink: the tradition continues today, and the temptation to relax before a demonstration with a quick one is still claiming victims.

Drunkenness, of course, is the prerogative of no field. There are boozy bishops, and doctors have more than their share of self-injury. Until there is a proper occupational health service for mediums, we will not know the full balanced picture, but it is surely clear that the development and practice of mediumship can be a mixed blessing.

There are also sexual aspects of Spiritualism, rarely discussed but very real. Among psychical researchers, Peter Underwood, president of the Ghost Club, has collected much evidence of sexual involvement in psi, some of which appears in his book *Into the Occult*. A rare recognition in print by a Spiritualist leader is Ronald J. Baker's *The Sexual Polarity and Mediumship*, privately published in 1974. Baker was then secretary of the Spiritualists' National Union and well placed to form a good perspective.

"A study of mediums," he said, "will often reveal a strongly developed subjective nature, which may show as sensitivity and gentleness in males and masculine characteristics in females." And again, "Historically, the many sexual taboos, including transvestite seer-priests, etc, indicate the connections between mediumship and human polarity."

What Baker does not say is that there is a substantial gay scene in Spiritualism, at least among men and that not infrequently those coping with pronounced mediumistic sensitivity are also having to come to terms with their own homosexuality. In view of Christian attitudes to both these states, it is a wonder Spiritualist hostility in reply is not greater than it is!

One may be willing to explore Spiritualism in the hope of obtaining evidence of spirit identity, but for most people this is by no means as easy as a perusal of Spiritualist propaganda suggests. It is not merely nostalgia that makes old timers say the mediums are not what they were. As the highly experienced Bill Harrison at Balham often observes, physical mediumship has become, pub-

licly, nearly unobtainable. Deep trance mediumship, which produced some of the best evidence (for example, through Mrs Gladys Osborne Leonard) has also diminished. But even in the golden age mediums did not always convince each other.

D. D. Home, the remarkable physical medium, was scathing about his colleagues. Mrs Leonore Piper, the much-studied trance medium who lived to old age, did not commit herself on the origin of her trance entities. Eileen Garrett was always in two minds about the real nature of her "guides", even after she founded the Parapsychology Foundation to promote scientific study of such matters. Rosalind Heywood, another sensitive acquainted with research, though polite to dead people who have called on her, has had difficulty believing in them. Conservatively one may guess that 10% of mediums are uncertain about survival, including some of the best in London. All they know is that they get impressions!

This raises the question of fraud by mediums. It is not a major problem because, in Britain, there is not much money to be made from mediumship. Even the fake physical mediums, of whom there were several active in the '50s, have left the stage (curiously coincident with the genuine article). Nevertheless, the enquirer may be deceived. In his lifetime, any number of Americans would have testified to the mediumship of Arthur Ford, but after his death, obituaries of famous persons were found among his possessions. Bishop James Pike was among those who had been favoured with such a communicator. More recently, it has been disclosed that a famous test message that Ford got from Houdini may have been supplied by



Margery Crandon, a top American medium, had an alcohol problem.

Houdini's widow, with whom Ford was having an affair. (See William Rauscher *The Spiritual Frontier*, New York, 1975.)

Nearer home is the case of Geraldine Cummins, who transmitted the important *Swan on a Black Sea* scripts. Few English researchers doubted her integrity, but Professor E. R. Dodds, who died this year, was not convinced of this. Dodds was Irish, as was Miss Cummins; they first met

in the First World War in Dublin. Over the years, she spoke more candidly to her compatriot about where some of her material derived. She was a cataloguer at the National Library of Ireland, with exceptional opportunity for locating obscure data. (See E. R. Dodds *Missing Persons*, Oxford, 1977.)

The ordinary enquirer into Spiritualism is in no position to know whom to believe, among the mediums, the writers and the press stories, except by long experience, painfully disillusioning at times. Even fellow Christians as investigators may be broken reeds. Bishop Pike is perhaps best known in recent years and in *The Other Side* (1969) he presented his survival evidence from his son. Within months Pike was dead, no medium having warned him to stay away from the Judean desert.

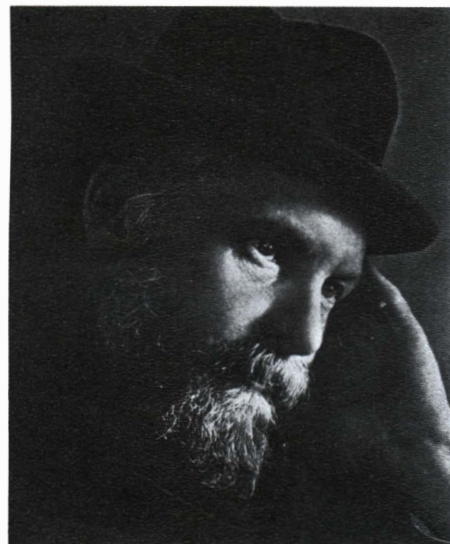
As for his survival evidence, the Ford exposure (above) battered this, and a biography by two friends, with an introduction by Diane, his third wife, rendered it unusable (see Stringfellow & Toyne *The Death and Life of Bishop Pike*, New York, 1976).

The bishop, for all his virtues, was an alcoholic who had earlier been accused of heresy by his own church. Some of the spontaneous phenomena that occurred around the bishop in Cambridge may have been faked by a woman in his entourage, Maren Bergrud, who appears to have been Pike's mistress. But we cannot ask her, because she, like the Bishop's son, committed suicide.

You may feel it is distasteful to cite the alleged misdeeds of the dead, who are not here to defend themselves, but before we leave the question of fraud, we must note the biggest difficulty derives from "mixed" mediums with real gifts which they demonstrate to the satisfaction of Spiritualist newspapers, and who can then count on sympathetic treatment for ever after. But in defence of the press, it should be said that it is unusual for evidence of fraud to reach them in strong enough form for it to be used without risk of libel proceedings.

Fraud, however, is a minor problem; more serious are the inadvertent mistakes by which a person may blight his life through listening to a medium. Here are three examples from Sir Lawrence Jones, an SPR president who in his Address of 1928 recalled the founders whom he knew personally. Jones believed in survival and in mediumship, and he had belonged to a good home circle. Unlike Dodds, he believed that Miss Cummins could communicate with the dead, but about predictions by mediums, he has three cautionary tales.

"I have 414 days to live," Frederick Myers told his astonished friend. "Yes, my death has been definitely predicted to me for a day in February 1902". The source of this notion was apparently an above-average mental medium Mrs R. Thompson. Unfortunately, Myers died in January 1901. He had planned his remaining work on *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, the



Frederick Myers' great book was unfinished because of a prophecy that was wrong.

greatest book in psychical research, on the assumption that he could devote a month to a chapter and still have time left. Thus his *magnum opus* was unfinished; the epilogue which argues for survival is there, but not some of the supporting evidence.

Another researcher who became convinced of communication was Richard Hodgson. "The records show," says Jones, "that a continued and prosperous life was prophesied for Hodgson himself. Part 2 of his paper on Mrs Piper never saw the light, and it is probable that the prophecies had encouraged him to postpone writing until he had the whole of the evidence before him." Once again the medium who had convinced was also the medium who, in a major matter, either led astray or was misunderstood by her sitter.

No mental medium, in fact, was researched as much as Mrs Piper, a gracious lady. But Hodgson himself had noted in 1894 that she had written through automatic writing while in trance that Professor Henry Sidgwick of Cambridge, England, the first SPR president, would die soon of heart failure. One can imagine the distress such a prediction could cause to Hodgson. In fact, Sidgwick died in six years, but not of heart failure.

It will be pointed out that predictions are sometimes strikingly correct, but the problem is that there is no way of knowing in advance which will be correct! Every sensible enquirer will say that, of course, the best of mediums are not infallible, nor are their communicators. But a certain authority does attach to sayings that are thought to be not of this world. Indeed, the subconscious mind, which has been known to intrude into some mediumship, shows rather a taste for over-definite pronouncements, and if we believe in a measure of psychic interpenetration between medium and sitter, we will accept the oft-made point that our inner hopes—or fears—can be fed back to us inadvertently.

Although mediums are mainly concerned with other aspects of

communication, predictions are not uncommon, and anyone who has say six sittings over some months, as a new enquirer, will probably be told something about the future. Coming to a balanced view of this material can be painful. Why should Christians, or anyone else, expose themselves to it?

The human temptation to avoid responsibility by seeking "inside" information is universal and in part justified, but apart from the scientists who collect predictions and other psychic data for research purposes (and suffer for it, as the cases of Myers, Hodgson and Sidgwick show), the receipt of such material may be misguided for humans. Responsible mediums guard against death predictions, and are able to help many, but not a few people are caught up into a fog of statements that might fit, of prophecies that might be true *if* interpreted thus, and *if* the sitter takes certain steps. Timing, incidentally, is one of the greatest difficulties in interpretation, because psychic perception is usually "out of time."

Even the most famous mediums are not exempt from blazing error. This year is the 40th anniversary of a story which, so far as I know, has never been retold in detail: the no-war prophecies, in which White Eagle, Red Cloud, Silver Birch, the Financier (a communicator of Geraldine Cummins) and the SNU president, with many other mediums (though not all) committed themselves to the statement that there would be no war.

Prophecy was wrong

Psychic News of September 2, 1939, hammered home this message on its front page by summarising how weighty was the guides' testimony. If Spiritualists bought *Psychic News* that Sunday as they arrived in church, they could read this even as Chamberlain was broadcasting that we were at war. What would have been the consequences if Air Chief Marshal Dowding, a Spiritualist in a vital position, had decided on the basis of these predictions that we could cancel our orders for planes, because there was to be no war?

We cannot test the statements of guides when they say they have talked with Jesus and he disapproves of the Church of England and its teachings. But in 1939 many of the most publicised guides committed themselves to an important statement that could be tested—that there would be no war. Other tests have been arranged whereby people attempt to

communicate pre-arranged messages after they have died. Most of them, including Sir Oliver Lodge, fail. A few succeed to the satisfaction of those left, but this emphasises the difficulties and problems of communication.

Tom Johanson, secretary of the Spiritualist Association, says in his newspaper *Spiritualist Gazette* (June 1979): "Generally, mediumship has never been reliable; it has always been judged by its weakest link, and it always will be. Its philosophy—backed up by many of the ageless scriptures of other beliefs—is infallible." But is it? If you consult the Swedenborgians, followers of the first philosopher of modern Spiritualism, you will find that they do not approve of other mediumship. If you look for the books of Andrew Jackson Davis, the next great philosopher, who inspired the Spiritualist Lyceums (Sunday Schools), you will find that his works are out of print, and no Spiritualist body will reprint them. The same applies to numerous other Spiritualist thinkers, like Hudson Tuttle, Ernest Thompson, and most books by Stainton Moses.

If, however, you trace these books through the useful Spiritualist church libraries, you will find strange things. Although Emma Hardinge Britten, founder of *Two Worlds*, a Spiritualist publication, condemned public demonstrations of clairvoyance because of the mixed influences of so many discarnates and incarnates involved, nearly all the Spiritualist churches disregard her. Yet she transmitted the seven principles of Spiritualism, which (like the Ten Commandments of the Bible) appear in more than one version.

The seven Principles of the Spiritualists' National Union, a sort of creed required for purposes of legal registration of the denomination, makes no mention of Jesus, though some clauses are a reaction against certain interpretations of Victorian theology. Nor is reincarnation mentioned. Nearly all the SNU pioneers, including Arthur Findlay, were against it, as were their guides. But Tom Johanson is for it, along with most spirit guides today. (He also considers the biblical events to be important as symbols of stages of spiritual experience, rather than as historical facts.)

But the Greater World Christian Spiritualists *do* include Jesus in their beliefs—as leader. However, their founder—medium Winifred Moyes and her guide Zodiac were agreed that reincarnation on this earth was just not on. Yet

another Spiritualist body, the White Eagle Lodge, does offer both reincarnation and an esoteric version of the Christ Spirit. Incidentally, all these bodies—the Lodge, the SAGB, GW, and SNU—have churches or centres within a few miles of each other in West London.

Clearly the spirits are not agreed on how many times we live on earth, and about the significance of Jesus. Continental spirits had long taught reincarnation, in the main, thanks to the major influence of Allan Kardec. British spirits were swinging this way even before the Common Market, but they do so at the risk of contradicting their pioneers.

A sceptic might say that the "philosophy" of Spiritualism reflects the diversity of ill-designed concepts in the psychic subconscious of the era. Certainly communicators have different views on religion and it may be doubted how reliable is their information.

We would all like to know about what really happened in Palestine in the first century. Spiritualism offers dozens of



Lord Dowding, a famous Spiritualist: what would have happened if he had acted on the "no war" prophecies?

versions: Geraldine Cummins' *The Scripts of Cleophas*, Mrs Curran's *Sorry Tale*, David Duguid's *Hafed, Prince of Persia* (who says "Jesus had no earthly father"), Edgar Cayce's *Story of Jesus*, Hester Dowden's *Gospel of Philip*, and others that lie forgotten on the topmost shelves of psychic libraries. Alas, they disagree among themselves. Tudor Pole's *A man seen afar* is not the Jesus clairvoyantly perceived by Rudolf Steiner, and so on. They are no more in agreement than are biblical scholars.

Mediums often portray clergy and other Christians dying and entering the spirit world where they have to be "re-educated" to get away from bigotries and ignorances. That some Christians die in need of such help I readily agree. But the next world must be a big place, and there are many we don't hear from. It was supposedly Myers, communicating through Geraldine Cummins (*Beyond Human Personality*), who called the

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immediate world after death, "the Plane of Illusion."

Those discarnates who work there may not be ultimate authorities on deeper spiritual matters. Those who are happy to work across the veil with Spiritualists may not be representative of the wisest in heaven; and there is, in any case, abundant evidence that communication is difficult for those spiritually advanced.

Some Christians with considerable experience of seance room phenomena have concluded that they are instigated by demons to lead people astray, for example, Godfrey Raupert, a Roman Catholic who wrote *Modern Spiritism* (sic). Many Spiritualists will have written him off the moment I mentioned he was a Catholic, but his book despite lapses, shows both a considerable study of psychical research literature and much seance experience – more, in fact, of physical phenomena than Spiritualists get today.

Psychic subways

Most Spiritualists believe in nonhuman entities – some mediums see nature spirits, and there is occasional recognition that ectoplasmic circles in particular attract non-humans who can deceive. There are also human discarnates who impersonate. And Emma Hardinge Britten, in her *Autobiography*, noted the problem of communicators who turned out to be still alive on earth. It will be seen that at the very least the psychic subways are thronged with a mass of entities difficult to sort out.

Spiritualists will baulk at the demonic suggestion, but the tragic history of Spiritualism (as of other religions) does suggest some such corroding influence. The high ideals of Spiritualist philosophy are no more acted out than those of the gospel.

The more sensitive Spiritualists, like the more sensitive Christians, come to recognise the ambiguity of their party, and that it is not for every one. It is always worth listening to people of long and wide experience, and we may cite Shaw Desmond, the writer, who was a great Spiritualist propagandist in his day. In *Healing: Psychic and Divine* (1956), he notes the continued growth of Spiritualism and the distinguished people involved. He is quite sure the Apostle Paul, if he lived today, would be a prominent Spiritualist (some Christians would expect Paul to be a Pentecostal). "Uniquely cutting into the underbelly of materialism," says Desmond, "the Spiritualist movement in its unique demonstration that we survive death, may be the world's most important movement."

But he also notes (perhaps wearily): "Spiritualism is a mosaic of inconsistencies and 'sects', as exemplified by their 'churches', which are actually often weak imitations of the ordinary church, and which seem to be engaged in endless personal jealousies, bickerings, and squabbles. Philosophic teaching at many, if not most, of these Spiritualist churches is often conspicuous by its absence. Of the

'vision' which they are always claiming, they often have none."

He goes on to say that Spiritualist healers get results, though discarnates may not be involved in the healing, despite appearances. "The average spiritualist (sic) medium, and sometimes even the leaders of that vast and woolly movement, are woefully ignorant of the pitfalls of psychism and spiritualism, often imagining that which is not there."

This kind of testimony must be taken into account by any Christian, especially one who has any kind of responsibility for the welfare of others. In deciding whether to investigate the subject oneself, or if one should advise others to do so, there is much to weigh on both sides. Who is competent to judge these things? Who has not made many errors, has not, gracefully or otherwise, finished up with his foot in his mouth in this realm?

Nevertheless, motor cars kill far more people, and they are not out of bounds to any church. Even alcohol and nicotine, which are far more dangerous than psychic exploration, are increasingly accepted by Christians. Christians are not forbidden to have TV sets in their homes, though some will, on the Day of Judgement, wish they had spent less time sitting down before them. Some Vicars are still, even in the Home Counties, telling their people that they will not meet their spouses after death – or anyone else, either – till the Last Day or (as some sophisticates now believe) never, since all perish at death save in the mind of God.

Without some people to pioneer in the confusing realms of the paranormal, how will much of the Church ever come to a more humane and realistic appreciation of life after death – even of the psychic factors in everyday life, not to mention the ESP of worship.

Far to go

So there is no overwhelming answer, and what is wise for one person will be folly for another. What may be hoped for, longed for, is that we should not be too abrasive about those who stay clear of psi, and not too scathing about those who venture to explore. In the parable, neither the Prodigal Son nor the obedient brother who stayed at home, was without faults, and neither was rejected.

We need, perhaps, the best of all worlds. The history of Modern Spiritualism and Christianity have so interacted, in effect and counter-effect, that there can be an endless regression of blaming each other. Each has things to learn from the other, even if their beliefs remain apart.

Idealistic people, open to new truths, have occupied themselves with mediumship and Spiritualism. Justice must be done to them, their insights, their struggles. Other people, no less open to God, have been illuminated by more traditional religious streams. They, too, should be given a hearing. Everyone, on both sides, has blind spots, fears, and far to go before the final balance can be struck.

contd. from p.11.

controlled conditions are not as easy to discredit. Therefore, to the unconscious mind of the experimenter who is probably involved in the co-production of psi phenomena, such spontaneous occurrences are perhaps a "compromise".

It is clear that my results seem related, to some extent, to the degree of rapport I feel with the experimenter. I don't know what this rapport is; it seems to be unconscious, as I often feel empathy with an experimenter with whom I do not get results. I believe there is reasonable evidence that the experimenter is as much involved as I am myself in the production of phenomena. It is, therefore, absurd to expect any psychic to demonstrate the same results in tests irrespective of the circumstances in which they are tested.

Of course, the sceptic always insists that a phenomenon is not scientifically proven until it is repeatable under the same conditions by anybody. It is clear that more research is needed into the "experimenter-effect" if advances are to be made in psychical research. Rather than analyse the psychic involved, the researcher has to analyse himself, too. And there lies the problem as the experience becomes subjective rather than objective.

This effect is not confined to psychical research. Occasionally it occurs in orthodox scientific research as Arthur Koestler describes in *The Act of Creation*.⁴

"Rosenthal gave one group of his research workers rats which, he explained, were 'geniuses' specially bred from a stock with exceptionally good maze-learning records. To a second group of researchers he gave what he explained were 'stupid rats'. In fact, all rats were of the same common-or-garden breed; yet the score-sheets of the 'genius rats' showed unmistakably that they learned to run the maze much faster than the 'stupid rats'. The only explanation Rosenthal could offer 'was that the bias in the research workers' minds had somehow been transmitted to the rats; just how this had been done he confessed not to know.' "

I believe the experimenter in psychical research has to conduct his task not as an Inquisitor, but as a partner.

1. *Experiments with Matthew Manning*, William Braud, Gary Davis and Robert Wood, to be published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*.
2. *Famed Psychic Demonstrates Incredible Mind Power*, Charles Parmiter, *National Enquirer*, July 28, 1979.
3. *Experiences with Matthew Manning*, James L. Hickman, Washington Street Research Center, San Francisco, 1979.
4. *The Act of Creation*, Arthur Koestler, Hutchinson & Co. 1964.

Entering the new space age

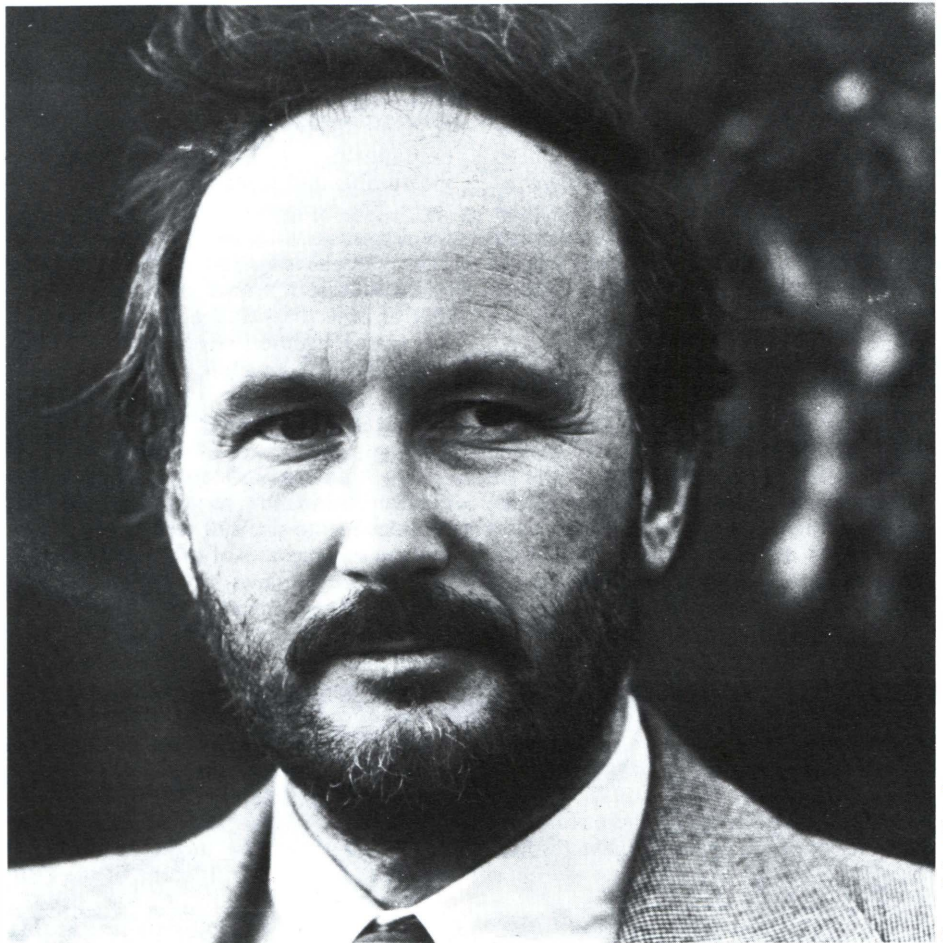
No one has hounded out the false claims and half-baked theories that clutter the literature of the paranormal with more thoroughness than Stan Gooch. As he explains to David Harvey, there is too much at stake to allow these distractions to cloud the real issues.

MOST THEORIES about the paranormal are as bizarre and implausible as the phenomena they seek to explain. Alternatively, they are simplistic in the extreme, relying on assumptions of such enormity that their credibility crumbles with their very utterance. Thinkers who blend originality with insight and reasonableness are few and far between. But Stan Gooch is one of that rare breed. He has developed his own line of thought, nurtured through a series of books written over the past ten years. The ideas Gooch has hatched are maturing nicely and anyone with an interest in the subject cannot afford to pass them by. His latest book *Guardians of the Ancient Wisdom*, appears this autumn. The next, its companion volume, *The Double Helix of the Mind*, will be out next year.

What will appeal to many people is the way in which he demolishes suspect half-baked and deceptive claims in getting down to the issues. In *The Paranormal*, he spares no time in jettisoning the many false, misleading and loose theories that abound in the literature of the subject, which is, he says, "riddled with fraud, lies, errors, exaggerations and general silliness, in the way an old house is riddled with dry rot". Out of the window go von Daniken's ancient-astronaut theories: "Does von Daniken not know that many of his illustrations are forgeries? Is he very careless? Is he not careless but simply indifferent? Or what is he?"

The sensationalised events that were concocted into the Bermuda Triangle Theory are exposed for what they are. The uncritical consumption of claims made for psychic surgery and extra-terrestrial travel is cited as an example of the "overwhelming 'will to believe' in most paranormalists". But Gooch does not throw out everything with the trash. He does believe in the reality of telepathy—because he has experienced it himself—premonitions and other phenomena for which there seems to be reasonable support.

Reasonable is a key word for him. His interest in the many aspects of the subject has not resulted in the championing of particular causes, or dogmatic acceptance of any theory. "What I love is the truth," he says, "whatever it is." And, reasonably enough, he is ready to revise his opinions in the light of fresh evidence, a willingness which marks him out from those scientists who are as resolutely and staunchly opposed to even considering the possibility that certain phenomena occur. Theirs is what he describes as the "paranoia of the scientist in the face of the paranormal".



Stan Gooch

He is, he explained, quite happy to reconsider his dismissal of Kirlian photography, one of the subjects that he cites in *The Paranormal*, as being the victim of over hasty and unwarranted claims, if fresh research shows that technical problems with the process have been overcome, (a development reported in Issue Three of *Alpha*). "It doesn't matter to me how it turns out."

Unlike some who are born into a world that seems to have an extra psychic dimension from the start, Stan Gooch had no experiences of this sort as a child. "But I did have a rich imaginary life, a love of nature, fairy tales, myths and literary magic. When other kids were out playing, I was reading. I spent a long time wondering about the magical world I'd read about. Could it be in Africa, the Far East, or South America? It took me some time to realise that it's not a place you can find in the external world. I was still looking in shops in the hope that I'd find a magic carpet at the age of fourteen!"

As he grew up, his curiosity was

submerged by other preoccupations and it was not until some time later that his interest was to be fully aroused. Following University and his graduation in modern languages, he went at the age of 26 to teach in the Midlands where he came into contact with a Spiritualist group which held regular seances. He was invited along and "quite dramatically went into trance". It was like coming home. "I had more or less lost confidence in the magical world of my childhood. Now I had discovered it. I felt it was a tremendous affirmation." He compares it to what he believes a religious conversion must be like: "There's a feeling of release."

By this time Gooch had plunged into psychology and taken a degree in the subject. Even so conventional psychology does not make room for the kind of phenomena which he had discovered. So he set out on his own to account for and interpret them in a way that seemed to make sense. His territory is not parapsychology, at least not in the sense of validating ESP and similar powers.

Gooch has chosen a much broader approach to the subject that considers these abilities in the context of man's evolution, myth-making capacity, religious and other deep-seated needs. Of course, these topics are the object of continual exploration. The difference in Gooch's case is that his version accepts a psychic component in man's make-up, the missing piece of the jig-saw without which the rest of the picture will not make sense. In the past it was accepted, but subsequently disregarded: "the whole magical side of man's nature was thrown on the scrap heap by science."

If mankind is to evolve, he argues, it will only be after it has rummaged through the scrap heap to relearn what has been forgotten. His latest book, *Guardians of the Ancient Wisdom*, is a search for clues amongst the myths, traditions and relics that have survived from the distant past. (A full review will appear in a later issue of *Alpha*).

The magical way

The job of sifting the nuggets from the dross is not easy though. First we have to decipher the evidence. "Nearly all the so-called ancient wisdom (the books of spells, the magic signs, the secret rituals) . . . is a memory of a memory, in itself without direct value: except, that is, as a signpost," he writes, "as the bearer of the message: 'there was once something else that was wonderful'."

"Or rather – there is something else that is wonderful! This is the message for us today."

"There is another way of going about things than the conscious, logical, scientific, masculine way. There really is a magical way. The lowest or base form of this is intuition. The highest form is clairvoyance."

"We have today sadly lost touch with this whole area of our being."

How do we get back in touch? When we talked, Gooch discussed the difficulty of getting to grips with the processes of mediumship, clairvoyance and other related faculties. "The main trouble is that most people who are gifted in this way are unable to discuss the subject intellectually. They can't tell you anything about it." Most, but not all: there are some individuals he has found who are gifted intellectually as well as psychically and can throw light on what they do.

But there is only so far that you can go in explaining and describing these abilities, believes Gooch, because they belong to a different realm. "Take the clairvoyant vision of something that has not yet happened. It stands to reason that you can't repeat it. The only way you can demonstrate its validity is to experience it yourself." Clairvoyance of this sort cannot be duplicated in the laboratory. "You can know it subjectively, but you can't prove it objectively." It belongs to what he classifies as the genuinely paranormal: phenomena that do not belong to the "here and now", that cannot be

performed to order, and that have some uncontrollable spontaneity about them.

He feels this is a useful distinction that helps to clarify the issue of whether the paranormal is unexplained or inexplicable. Events that do not seem to violate the fundamental laws of time and space are, he believes, more likely to fall into the category of not-yet explained and, according to his definition, probably are not paranormal. In this group he includes poltergeist activity which is tied to the presence of a particular person. Healing ability can be demonstrated in the laboratory and thus seen to work objectively. "Science can handle this." It is more likely, in his view, that some explanation will be advanced for measurable and repeatable effects such as these. The exploration of other powers and faculties is another matter. "I think this is only possible subjectively. What we need to do is raise the level of subjectivity to that of objectivity." Yet this goes against the grain: "subjectivity is a dirty word academically", he admits.

Laws are reversed

Gooch has made a start on pursuing this goal and the pursuit, as might be expected, soon leads into difficult territory. "As far as I can see, the laws of subjectivity are the reverse of the laws of objectivity and science. They involve the absence of consistency; instead of repeatability, you have non repeatability. The subjective system is as variable as there are people in the world." Which he does confess presents difficulties in the way of comparing notes. There is common ground, however, in the means of carrying out this exploration. "Trance is a unifying state, although there might be different ways of getting there. It's one of the keys to the whole business."

However difficult and paradoxical this journey appears to be, Gooch believes that the conventional ways of science have not and will not solve all our problems. "I believe it's crunch time. Something's got to happen. From here it's got to be down hill or up hill. We must turn inwards, not outwards for the answers." He added, "the paranormal could represent the real space age. We might never get to the stars physically, but we can get there intuitively, by going inwards."

can anything be done by amateur investigators to get to the bottom of particular sightings? "It all depends on the individual's level of skill and training. I have known people who have gone along to question people and instead of getting the facts have just fed them with their own wild ideas and theories about UFOs. They need to be properly trained as investigators."

The scope for confusion and misinformation about UFOs remains considerable, particularly when poorly reported and evaluated evidence is all there is to go on. Neither do the experts' instant judgments help to throw any light on matters. Dr Hynek criticises those scientists who are all too ready to pass judgment, neither having first-hand experience of the phenomenon nor having examined the facts. The New Zealand UFO film was seen around the world and was instantly dismissed by many scientists as a freak natural phenomenon. "Sir Bernard Lovell was totally irresponsible when, without having all the data, he said that what had been filmed must have been some kind of burnt-out meteorite."

Yet, whatever the experts say and however slight the evidence might be, curiosity about the UFO phenomenon shows no sign of waning. Under the Freedom of Information Act, UFOs came fifth on the list of subjects government bodies are most frequently quizzed on. Dr Hynek can think of something else that would help to lift the veil of secrecy. "The President could extend special immunity to any service officers and officials, subject to secrecy regulations, reporting a UFO encounter."

Who knows, the proposal could transform Jimmy Carter's re-election prospects.

Dr J. Allen Hynek's Center for UFO Studies is based at 1609 Sherman Avenue, Suite 207, Evanston, Illinois 60201, U.S.A. It publishes a bulletin, and other publications to which the public can subscribe.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

LIKE most scientific meetings, this year's Parascience Conference in London was at its most interesting when the participants were dealing in anecdotes rather than theory (see News and Oracle pages).

Nevertheless, the conference is an important event in the parapsychological calendar, and Peter Maddock's Institute of Parascience can be relied upon to organise a lively four-day agenda. It was held at the Engineering Faculty's lecture theatre, University College, London, early in September, and attracted speakers from Europe, Israel and America.

Julian Isaacs, the current Perrott-Warwick student in parapsychology, gave a fascinating account of his work with metal-bending. This will be dealt with in more detail in a future issue of *Alpha*. He has developed very sensitive apparatus to detect minute changes in metal and has discovered that such psychokinesis (PK) – the influence of mind over matter – frequently coincides with emotional reactions when people are talking informally or even listening to a lecturer.

What happens is that when a word that is emotive – such as "death," or "pregnant" – comes into the conversation it creates a reaction in one or more of the people present, and that in turn produces a small burst of PK which is registered by his equipment. Certain individuals, like Uri Geller, appear to possess PK ability to a high order. But Isaacs' research suggests that 1% of the population may have micro-PK.

He made the interesting observation (which is echoed by Matthew Manning elsewhere in this issue) that PK will often happen when it is least expected, for example just as an attempt to produce it is abandoned.

This suggests that if you try too hard to produce the phenomenon it blocks PK. The moment you give up trying, or you are distracted, the block is removed and PK occurs.



Dr Heinz Berendt

Julian Isaacs later joined forces with Alan Mayne to discuss ways of harnessing PK and putting it to use. They are attempting to perfect a machine that would be influenced by PK to throw a switch, for example, when it was required. Isaacs said that he, for one, would find it very useful, as he was driving home late at night, to be able to switch on his electric blanket simply by triggering the device at a distance by PK.

The conference also heard a first-hand account of what it is like to have a metal-bender in the family. The father of a 15-year-old boy who is one of Professor John Hasted's star subjects gave the family background and their reactions to the boy's psychic powers (he heals, too). But he spoke under a pseudonym in order to protect his son's identity.

Prof Hasted also spoke to the conference, having just returned from Japan where he was able to study metal-bending research being carried out in that country by Professor Sasaki, a mechanical engineer at the University of Electrocommunications, Chofu, Tokyo. The professor's most interesting subject is a boy, Masuaki Kiyota, who produces incredible twists in cutlery and psychic photographs similar to those of American Ted Serios.

Another metal-bending boy was the subject of a talk by Dr Heinz Berendt from Jerusalem. The Israeli parapsychologist described his personal experiences with the boy – named Ori – who now lives with his parents in Australia but agreed to be tested by Dr Berendt and his colleagues while on a visit to Israel. A film was also taken of the boy causing forks to bend which was shown at the conference.

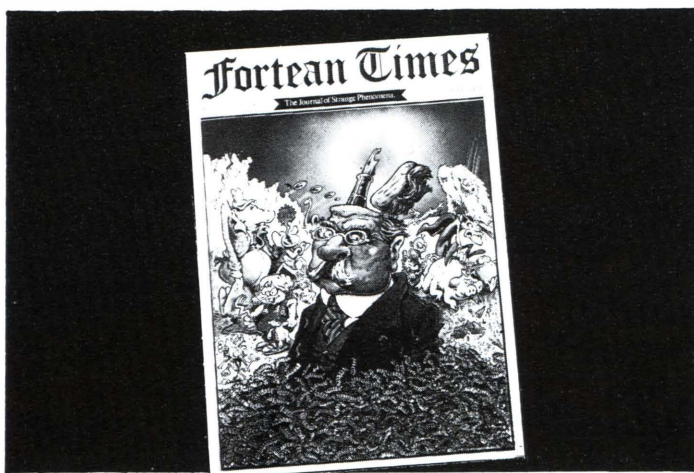
A non-psychic contribution which was particularly fascinating was Professor N. F. Dixon's "Evidence for Preconscious Processing". He showed that the unconscious mind perceives far more than we realise. For example, he cited a study of unconscious

perception in women who were given cervical cancer tests. Before the results were known a doctor recorded their speech, and from the words they used made predictions about whether or not they had cancer.

It was found that those who did have cancer – even though they were consciously unaware of it – used words associated with despair, whereas those who did not used words that were hopeful.

British parapsychologist Dr John Beloff, who works at the University of Edinburgh, dealt with categories of psi, and in particular with the evidence for survival of death. Some researchers exhibit a strange attitude to survival evidence, and Dr Beloff pointed out that it is "high-handed to suggest that any alternative explanation is preferable to the simple interpretation of the facts."

This was the eighth Parascience Conference and it attracted a small but appreciative audience. Four days of high-powered discussion on psi-related topics requires a strong stomach (and a scientific background) but to the dedicated few it provides an important platform for new views.



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TM – something more to meditate on

There was a time when transcendental meditation seemed to have universal support as – at the very least – a harmless method of relaxation. Not all medical experts now share that view. Denise Winn investigates.

IN RECENT months transcendental meditation has been dragged into the limelight a little more than it might have liked. Having caught the imagination of countless Westerners (over 60,000 have trained in the UK alone) as a simple effective way of relaxing, TM has now raised English eyebrows by its more exotic claims for giving its practitioners extraordinary powers, such as the ability to fly.

A recent *Guardian* article highlighted the fact that a number of people are leaving the movement in disgust because their attempts to learn to “fly” (using a Sidhi technique taught on special courses) had left them suffering depression, suicidal feelings, an inability to work and physical ailments, such as digestive problems, into the bargain.

Such accounts of such strange goings on have led certain psychologists, like John Nicholson from London University, to withdraw support for the method which previously they had thought a harmless and effective relaxation technique. For it was TM’s efficacy for reducing stress in the body that first attracted psychologists’ attention and led many to investigate the practice to see whether it might be a useful adjunct to therapy for certain anxiety and tension states and phobic reactions.

One of the most vociferous supporters of the TM technique was Herbert Benson, a cardiologist at Harvard University whose special interest was the reduction of stress diseases, such as heart attacks and hypertension. He and colleague Robert Wallace carried out extensive studies of TM meditators and found that, during meditation, heart rate, respiration rate, oxygen consumption and skin conductance all decreased – a physiological state exactly opposite to that of a body under stress.

These findings, borne out by other researchers in the early 70s, seemed to give a strong seal of approval to TM as a counter to the unhealthy stresses of modern life. After all, TM is a simple technique. Whereas other meditation systems, such as those used by Buddhists, Zen Buddhists, Yogis and Sufis, are all an integral part of the Eastern philosophy itself, TM was an extraction specially devised to fit Western needs by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It requires no special life-style, just 15 minutes quiet meditation on a mantra (a special word given to the meditator by his TM instructor) twice a day.

Not only has TM been found effective as

a stress-reducer but other researchers report that practitioners enjoy improved memory, better coordination, quicker reaction time and a sense of self fulfilment.

Daniel Goleman, then a Harvard psychologist, was impressed to find that when he showed a film depicting some nasty accidents in a wood-working shop to a group of meditators and non-meditators, their responses were markedly different.

Will any relaxation technique do just as nicely?

Just as an accident was about to happen, the heart rates of the meditators increased and they sweated more, as if getting ready to deal with the distressing sight. But as soon as the incident was over, their bodies relaxed almost instantly. Non-meditators did not have the preparatory stress reaction and remained tense long after the film was over.

In a very recent study, reported in the June *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, psychologist Dr Michael West reported that he had taught the TM technique to a group of people without calling it TM (so as to rule out any associated expectations) and found that it did seem to induce an ability to relax while outside of the meditation state.

So far, so good, and TM instructors have not been slow to capitalise on the good press they’ve had from psychologists. But, suddenly, the initial euphoria has started to wear off and the very researchers who supported TM so strongly are now wondering whether it really has anything special to offer as a relaxation technique or whether any other method would do just as nicely.

A Harvard group did an experiment which showed that in some ways TM is *less* effective than other meditation techniques. They compared a group trained in TM with a group trained in a system of meditation devised by Georgei Gurdjieff, a Russian who brought a variety of esoteric techniques to Europe at the turn of the century. Both groups were trained to direct their attention. But the Gurdjieff group

was capable of “turning off” all the brain centres not directly involved with any task at hand. When the subjects were required to look at a picture, the Gurdjieff group, when tested with electrodes, were found to have quietened the motor centre of the brain. When they were asked to concentrate on sensations in their right hand, their visual centre turned off. The TM group couldn’t achieve this degree of sophistication in attention control.

A researcher called Schwarz is particularly alarmed at the claims that have been made for TM. “The proponents of TM have tended to present research data as if TM were the only way of producing beneficial and systematic changes in consciousness. This is hardly the case.” He goes on to cite the benefits of progressive relaxation, a system that concentrates on muscle relaxation and which is effective in reducing stress.

Dr Michael West, the psychologist from the University of Kent who has made extensive studies of TM, also found that equally good effects were reported, relaxation-wise, when subjects used a “real” mantra (ie, a special one given by TM instructors and supposed to have some intrinsic powers) and when they just used any word, lacking any esoteric significance. It has been suggested by others that it is the introduction of a dominant frequency (a constantly repeated word) which is working to dampen limbic system activity in the brain, with a resultant quietening of that part of the brain itself. This would bear out West’s finding that any word repeated is as good as another.

American psychologist Robert Ornstein has also contributed to the demystification of the meditation process. He says that the “blinking out” sensation and the ability to turn off from the surrounding environment is the result of habituation. We need constant stimulation to stay alert. But if a stimulus remains unchanged for a long period, we cease to “see” or “hear” it. We acclimatise to it, just as we acclimatise to the ticking of clocks. So, if someone concentrates their attention on staring at a vase or repeating a certain word, the habituation response will take over.

In a review of TM techniques published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in November 1979, Dr West quotes some work that questions certain early claims that meditation can lead to a significant reduction in depression, anxiety, irrita-

bility and neuroticism generally. Some researchers who indeed found such decreases now admit that the findings are somewhat clouded by the fact that people who are attracted to meditation techniques are significantly more anxious and neurotic than the normal population anyway. So decreases would obviously appear more dramatic.

It has been very difficult to run any carefully controlled experiments of whether TM is a more effective relaxant than other methods because of the many factors external to TM that are involved. People are motivated to succeed, for instance, because they pay a lot of money. They also expect results and expectation can account for much.

To account for this, Diane Thomas, when at the University of Surrey, designed an experiment to compare the effects of TM with another fee-paying programme geared only to teaching relaxation: an organisation called Relaxation for Living. She subjected the participants, who were aged on average about 46, to a battery of tests to assess their anxiety levels and

hypochondriasis (the tendency to imagine one has symptoms of illness, which often accompanies excess anxiety).

People attend the Relaxation for Living course because they have high anxiety levels, so she chose as TM subjects those who also showed high anxiety levels. After testing the subjects before and some time after finishing their courses, she found no significant difference in the reduction of anxiety between the two techniques – both were effective – but that hypochondriasis only lessened significantly after the Relaxation for Living course. However, whereas the latter group found marked benefits in recognising when their bodies were tense and learning how to control that, the TM subjects claimed mental benefits, such as more self knowledge or “psychic sensitivity”. But these were subjective reports. Thomas concludes that she could find no reason to expect TM to be more effective overall as a relaxation exercise.

Similarly Benson, the cardiologist who originally supported TM, has since also concluded that the relaxation response is

the important factor, not TM itself. He recommends sitting in a quiet room, closing your eyes and focusing on any word or object and letting a passive attitude take over. This, he says, can be perfectly effective for reducing stress. But, for those who need the added filip of a belief system to help them relax, TM is obviously beneficial.

So all the late studies seem to say that TM does not have any specially effective powers for reducing stress. In fact, some researchers fear it may, in some circumstances, be harmful. American psychologist Leon Otis found that a minority of long-term practitioners started to suffer anxiety, head pains and stomach ailments. Some stayed with the practice regardless, probably, according to Otis, because they had become committed to the TM way of life. For TM is not just a relaxation technique. It is a method for opening the mind and expanding the consciousness.

Other researchers have also noted depression and even schizophrenic breakdown after starting meditation, although some attribute this to over-doing it initially. TM instructors emphasise that students should not over-meditate. And it is perfectly reasonable to presume that, just as too much stress takes its toll on the system, so would too much relaxation, for the body is not biologically geared to prolonged meditation. In the long term it would seem to have an effect akin to sensory isolation, where the individual starts to hallucinate, as if in an attempt to induce some kind of stimulation from somewhere.

The effects of the more extraordinary powers that TM claims to open up to its keener practitioners (ie, those who take further specialised courses) remain unproven, reports being restricted to the first-hand accounts of the unsatisfied rather than the carefully controlled testing of a random sample. But, as far as relaxation benefits goes, it would seem that psychologists generally agree that TM is a very effective method – but by no means the only one.

“TM people claim that TM is different from other meditation techniques because it involves subtle areas of brain function,” said Dr West. “But there is no evidence to support this. And no research to support the claim that TM is any more effective as a relaxant than other relaxation techniques.”

However, the last word should go to Peter Russell, a psychologist who has himself studied TM and practised it for the last 12 years:

“TM certainly works and is an effective way of relaxing very quickly. But I see no reason why other methods shouldn’t achieve that too. However, TM is so much else. It’s about unwinding the mind and giving you deeper insight into relating to the world. Relaxation is just a by-product. The question is not really do other relaxation methods help you relax as well as TM but do other relaxation methods produce the same opening up of mind.”

(Top). The Maharishi European University presses on with research at its neurophysiological laboratories in its new headquarters, Mentmore Towers (below).



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BOOKS

UFOs: A BRITISH VIEWPOINT
Jenny Randles and Peter Warrington
Robert Hale, £5.25

ANY worthwhile new book on the UFO phenomenon must face what serious students of ufology now generally recognise – that somehow we have to come to terms with its essentially paradoxical nature. While UFOs are in one sense "real" – i.e., visible to more than one person, radar-detectable, etc – in another sense they are illusory – capable of changing shape or vanishing utterly, of *not* being seen by those who, by any known laws, *ought* to be able to see them.

Paradox is fun in a Gilbert & Sullivan opera, but disconcerting as a foundation for serious belief. Nevertheless, ufology is not the only field where it has to be accepted. Today's physicist has to build his entire science from units that are somehow both particle and wave, and parapsychologists in particular will feel sympathy for the ufologist's predicament, having lived for decades with the anomalies of ambiguous phenomena.

When it became evident to ufologists that there was more (or less) to UFOs than extraterrestrial spacecraft, the result was to polarise them into nuts-and-bolts reactionaries or all-in-the-mind radicals. Today, both alike accept that they can't simply wave a reductionist wand and show UFOs to be "nothing but ..." one or the other, but that we are faced not with an "either ... or" but with a "not only ... but also" situation.

This book is the first in English to face the paradox fairly and squarely, and I have no hesitation in recommending it as, quite simply, the most perceptive, most balanced and most constructive discussion of the phenomenon in print. Some French ufologists, notably Pierre Veroudy, have analysed the problem with equal

logic and arrived at similar conclusions: Randles & Warrington carry more conviction because they present their case not as a retrospective analysis but as a progressively developed argument.

Starting from ground level – both are experienced investigators of many years' standing – they work their way steadily through the increasing complexities of the phenomenon, and we mark their footsteps like readers of a mystery story. So we can see for ourselves that they practise no sleight-of-hand: we are never blinded with pseudo-science or fogged with metaphysics. Instead we are treated to a lucid, level-headed account in which every objection is anticipated and every doubt aired.

The authors themselves would be the last to claim that they have solved the UFO problem, but they convincingly establish that it is along this path that the solution will be found and they take us farther along it than any other writers. For them:

"Clearly it is not essential to look into space for a solution to the UFO mystery. Indeed ... it would appear that we must look more towards ourselves for the crucial answers, be they purely new abilities inherent within us, or be they the results of an external intelligence catalysing these talents."

With this book British ufology comes of age.

Hilary Evans

THE DYFED ENIGMA
Randall Jones Pugh and F. W. Holiday
Faber and Faber, £5.95

THIS is a reporters' book. Serious ufologists would doubtless have welcomed a more systematic and more fully documented presentation of the material; however, if they will accept this book for what it sets out to be, a work of reportage, they will find it a

This is a definitive work on poltergeists and haunting.

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Alan Gauld and
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Routledge & Kegan Paul,
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BOOKS

valuable contribution to UFO literature.

Confronted with sensational material, the authors have resisted the temptation to sensationalise. This is a cool, level-headed account of extraordinary happenings in a particular place at a particular time, with a high fact-to-chat ratio, decent indexing, maps and plans to guide us and ambiguous points carefully explained – like how to pronounce “Dyfed” (= dove-id).

The authors boldly face the challenging diversity of a phenomenon which one day will take the form of a huge object seen by one man, and by that one man only, in the main street of a town at 11am of a summer morning; and another will be seen, solid as a tractor, by more than a dozen children and adults.

On the basis of the first case, UFOs *have* to be subjective, creatures of the mind: on the basis of the second, they *have* to possess some kind of objective reality. And this paradox is only one of the bizarre features of the Welsh wave which involves, before the tale is told, humanoids walking through wire fences, teleported cattle and UFOs flying straight into solid rock.

Back in pre-scientific days it was the custom to issue books with titles like *An Authentic, Candid & Circumstantial Narrative of the Astonishing Transactions at S. . .* If this book has a shortcoming it is that, like those ancient chronicles, it sets forth its stange tale as a one-off affair, without relating it to comparable happenings elsewhere.

The common reader, unfamiliar with the literature of ufology, is not informed how usual/unusual are the phenomena described, so has no yardstick whereby to judge them. By way of explanation he is offered, at various times, celtic symbols, ley lines and masked deities, but again without sufficient background to form a valid assessment. Many readers might have welcomed a little more guidance in this respect.

Nevertheless, these defects do not detract from what is of real value in this book, which anyone with any interest in the paranormal should make a point of reading. Would that more of those who take it upon themselves to tell the public about such things approached their task with the same sense of responsibility, the same respect for facts and the same readiness to let the facts determine the interpretation rather than force them into a ready-made mold.

For, though much that happened in Wales in 1977 might be duplicated elsewhere, the Dyfed enigma has its own unique aspects, rooted in the location where it

manifested, and of this the authors with their strong local sense show themselves fully aware. One, Randall Jones Pugh, is a distinguished UFO investigator of long standing; the other, the late F. W. Holiday, is author of that stimulating study *The Dragon and the Disc* (also strongly recommended). Together they have given us, if not the definitive analysis of the subject we must continue to hope for, at least an honest, sober, well-written and convincing account.

Hilary Evans

POLTERGEISTS

Alan Gauld and A. D. Cornell
Routledge and Kegan Paul, £9.95

Part I of this 406-page book, “Survey and sampling of cases”, is by Gauld alone. He has done his homework thoroughly, and gives us a good review of some 450 years of well documented cases, wisely avoiding giving too much space to cases already well known. He has unearthed some interesting new material, notably in connection with the Tedworth Drummer case (1662-3), and he tackles the main features of the poltergeist enigma squarely and open-mindedly.

Yet, though the book is stated to be aimed at the general reader rather than the professional parapsychologist, Part I reads like a doctoral thesis, and Gauld’s erudition and academic attitudes can be irritating. The text is cluttered with listings of reprints of obscure pamphlets, which could have been tucked away at the end of the book, and there is a touch of snobbery in such references as to “G. H. Gerould’s well-known monograph” (p.19), of which I for one have never heard, and to a “popular but excellent” book (p.89), implying that such a combination is rare, which it is not. (If a mere popular writer may cock a snook at a senior university lecturer, might I ask him to look up the meaning of the word “scenario”, which he misuses on p.110?).

In Chapter 12, “Poltergeists and the computer”, Gauld presents a statistical analysis of 500 cases from some 60 source books and periodicals, both sources and cases being listed in a very useful appendix. Though clogged with technical jargon that will confuse many a general reader, this analysis is a welcome follow-up to W. G. Roll’s statistical work (*European Journal of Parapsychology* 2 (2) 1978).

Part II, “Some personal investigations and conclusions”, is by both authors. It opens with an admirable chapter on “Explaining away the poltergeist”, the final paragraph of which should be engraved on the wall of the Society

for Psychical Research headquarters. In brief, it says that to ascribe all poltergeist reports to fraud, trickery or malobservation is to adopt a stance bordering on insanity. (Which is just what, in my experience, some eminent SPR members have seemed to do).

In Chapters 14 to 16, the authors describe some of their joint and independent first-hand experiences. Though they have looked into about a hundred cases between them, they have, as far as I know, only hitherto published two, and they do not seem to have had much luck in observing paranormal activity. Perhaps the dreaded experimenter effect has been at work. However, Cornell’s 1963 water poltergeist case is interesting, and one wonders why it took 16 years to get into print.

The book ends with discussions of the possible forces involved in poltergeist activity and of the possible sources of the intelligence directing them. The authors are a bit hard on Professor Hasted, one of the very few scientists in this country who are even trying to track down the mysterious force, while in the discussion of possible discarnate entity involvement (pp. 359-60) they might have mentioned the considerable amount of research done by Allan Kardec in this controversial corner of the field, and published 20 years before the birth of the SPR.

Poltergeists, though somewhat exhausting reading, is full of valuable data and lucidly stated opinions. But it leaves me wondering, as the SPR plods towards its centenary, if there is anything more that the academic approach to the mystery of mind-matter interaction can achieve. Perhaps we should now throw away our library tickets, switch off our left hemispheres, and pray for enlightenment. This may not sound very scientific, but it seems to have worked in the past. It may even lead to the emergence of the Einstein of psychical research, and the Unified Psi-Field Theory we all need so desperately.

Guy Lyon Playfair

(Guy Lyon Playfair’s book on the Enfield poltergeist case, which he investigated with Maurice Grosse, is to be published next year.)

THE ANCIENT SCIENCE OF GEOMANCY

Nigel Pennick

Thames and Hudson £5.95

The topping out ceremony that is still observed when buildings are nearly complete is a lingering memory of an age-old practice. That, sacred geometry enshrined in medieval cathedrals, and the arcane skills of the megalith builders are some of the clues to

geomancy “which may roughly be defined as the science of putting human habitats and activities into harmony with the visible and invisible world around us”.

Perhaps it was a science. But the laws and principles that govern it remain as elusive as ever – despite Pennick’s fascinating and painstaking accumulation of evidence for pre-urban man’s interest in the auspicious sitings of buildings, the significance of sacred centres and the subtle relationship between temples and the horizon. One is left with a feeling that science is an inappropriate word.

That there was certainly a profound and deeply-felt sensitivity to the environment expressed in a variety of ways in different traditions and cultures is without doubt. In some instances it found expression in precise mathematical form, as has been shown at Stonehenge, the Pyramids and other cases of carefully surveyed alignments. But it seems to be premature to speak of a science of geomancy if it is to include all the phenomena Pennick covers in his book. Intuition and divination play an important role and they are more art than science. Geomancy, as it is discussed here, has a foot in both camps.

Travelling from China’s dragon lines to the sacred site of Delphi, from the enigmatic lines of Peru’s Nazca plains to Britain’s ley lines and royal roads, there are fleeting glimpses of similarities and parallels. But the pattern remains obscure.

A book, nonetheless, that conjures up another vision of man’s relationship to mother earth that we have lost. “The world is a holy vessel,” says the *Tao Te Ching*, “let him that would tamper with it, beware.” As radiation seeps into the earth and oil congeals the oceans, it could be a timely warning.

David Harvey

THE PARANORMAL

Stan Gooch

Fontana/Collins, £1.50

STAN Gooch’s self professed aim is to remove the study of the paranormal from the hands of scientists, to separate it from religious dogma and to question many of the organisations which claim to be involved in it.

In *The Paranormal* he attempts to achieve this by giving us his own well-reasoned alternatives to scientific and religious theories about the meaning and purpose of life. Added to his theories are as many facts as he can muster from his own experience and other credit worthy sources on various aspects of the paranormal.

contd. on p31.

Does he know too much?

THE controversial American psychical researcher, Dr Andrija Puharich, is reported to believe that the Russians are beaming radiation at the West to cause mental disturbance. He has, I understand, come up with evidence that the Soviets' psychological warfare has already had an impact on some areas of the USA.

The result, one of his fellow-researchers tells me, is that the CIA has told him to get out of the country. Their reason for doing so, apparently, is that Puharich is "confusing the military".

In his early days, Puharich was highly respected in the parapsychology community, but his involvement with Uri Geller has changed all that. His biography of Geller reported such astonishing phenomena that it was just too much for many of his more staid colleagues to accept. Claims that Geller was teleported in an instant over many miles, for example, or that large objects suddenly disappeared or materialised in his presence are regarded by them as highly unlikely.

But other researchers do report similar happenings with other subjects, and I suspect that in time Puharich may once again earn the respect of others in the field, when our understanding of these strange phenomena improves.

Occult restoration

THE FACT that Led Zeppelin has been making a film recently would not normally be noticed by *Alpha*, except for the fact that parts of it were shot in the grounds of guitarist Jimmy Page's home, Boleskin House, which once belonged to Aleister Crowley. Page, himself an occult enthusiast, bought the place in 1970 and has had it restored to its former state. It includes several murals by satanic artist, Charles Pace.

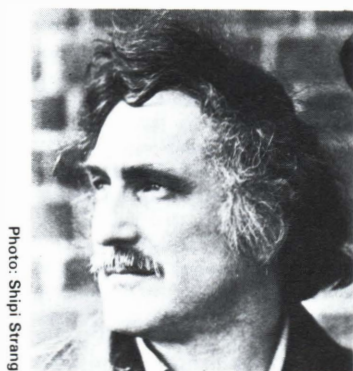


Photo: Shipi Strang

Dr Andrija Puharich

Serena in Wonderland

IF YOU want to understand the subconscious better you might find Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* helpful. "It's a parable about consciousness," says Serena Roney-Dougal who is carrying out research work on ESP at London's City University. Speaking to the Society for Psychical Research in London (September 4) she said she had read the book 12 times. "We're like Alice, trying all the doors trying to get into the garden."

She said our model of consciousness and the subconscious was "very gross". The Hindus have about 20 terms to describe gradations of consciousness and Tibetans have as many as 50.

Kundalini research

THE peak of conscious awareness, according to many people, is a state known as Kundalini. Probably the greatest living authority on the subject is Pandit Gopi Khrishna, a 76-year-old Indian who lives in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Gopi Khrishna meditated religiously for a period of 17 years,

rising at 4 am each morning, to keep up an ancient yogic tradition in self-mastery and discipline. His dedication was rewarded on Christmas morning, 1937, when he was meditating with his face turned toward the rising sun. "Suddenly, with a roar like that of a waterfall, he felt a stream of liquid light entering his brain through the spinal cord."

What he experienced was Kundalini, which elevated him to a state of consciousness "so blissful and so beautiful it is indescribable in human terms". The enlightenment he received through Kundalini has been put into several books on the subject of mysticism and spirituality. Gopi Khrishna has also founded the Central Institute for Kundalini Research, in Kashmir, which now has several affiliated organizations around the world.

Among those studying Kundalini are a team of doctors in Toronto, Canada, working under Dr Yvonne Kason, and the Second International Conference on Kundalini was held at that city's university in June this year.

Currently in London is Ed Resmini, a young Canadian with a keen interest in Kundalini research. He and an associate, Ian Carstairs, are holding informal meetings once a week, with a film show, to tell people more about the subject. He can be contacted by telephone on 01-451 0184.

Star study

A NEW magazine "with men in mind", called *View* (£2), has joined forces with Prof S. B. G. Eysenck to elicit information from its readers which will help in the professor's study of astrology.

The Autumn/Winter 1979 issue of *View* reprints two separate pages - one for men the other for women - from a questionnaire designed to investigate personality and compatibility. Prof Eysenck will be looking for significant

correspondences between the two and the birthdates of the participants.

The magazine tells of the early research work carried out by Drs Michel and Francoise Gauquelin, in France, published in 1973, which showed "indisputable planetary effects on human behaviour." Gauquelin, in the face of much scepticism, went on to replicate his study in 1977 with completely new birth data. The combined result of 172,000 cases produced a remarkable statistic: there was only one chance in 10 million that such significance could have occurred by chance.

Now Prof Eysenck is conducting similar research in this country and his results are to be evaluated by the Institute of Psychiatry, under the strictest scientific control.

Money for research

HOW much money is spent on investigating the paranormal? One often comes across wild guesstimates, but according to Dr Douglas Dean, speaking at the Parascience Conference in London in September, 12 American parapsychology laboratories have to make do with £40,000 between them.

The money which Stanford Research Institute scientists Puthoff and Targ have available for their psychic work apparently brings the annual total in the United States to around £500,000. Against that, he reported, the American Government's latest estimate of Soviet spending on psychic research puts it at around £250 million.

Spiritual protection?

IF THE Russians are spending that much on probing the paranormal then it seems reasonable to suggest that they might have an ulterior



KEN-COX

motive. Certainly people like Andrija Puharich seem to think that the Soviets are spending their money to good effect, and that we are all at risk from psychic bombardment of one kind or another.

But, as my colleague Roy Stemman pointed out in the *Radio Times*, in a review of *The Omega Factor* TV series, even the most ominous clouds have a silver lining for some people.

An American woman, calling herself Guru Ma, advertises her special powers in the American *Fate* magazine. She asks her readers if they know they "may be a target of disease-forming, mind-altering projections" and she goes on to suggest that the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, the mysterious legionnaire's Disease, and the microwave bombardment of the US embassy in Moscow, may all be evidence of psychotronic warfare. Readers who send \$12.50 will receive a tape recording from her which will offer psychic protection. What next?

Roy quoted another instance to show how gullible some people are: the story of Paul Goldin, the entertainer who was given tremendous free publicity in August when he announced that he intended to leap from an aircraft without a parachute and levitate to the ground. No one would co-operate in helping him do the stunt.

"But it didn't occur to anyone to ask why, if he could levitate, he should have needed an aircraft to lift him up in the first place," Roy wrote, adding, "Perhaps the Russians are coddling our minds after all."

Vanishing boy

JULIAN ISAACS, the young British researcher who was recently awarded the Perrott-Warwick studentship in parapsychology by Cambridge University, is studying a young metal-bender whose talents, at times, seem to rival those of Uri Geller. "His favourite trick is to make his mother's money disappear from sealed envelopes in a locked box," says Isaacs. "It gets returned. Bank notes – not metal – are his favourite."

Isaacs, who is repeating the anecdotes told to him by the boy's relatives, reports that the boy's family has seen a ring appear on and then disappear from his finger paranoimally. He even makes himself disappear, too. It often happens when he goes to the loo, which has only a one-foot deep window with an 18-foot sheer drop on the other side.

"On one occasion," Isaacs says,



Prof John Hasted attempts to influence the fork-bending apparatus developed by Julian Isaacs (right).

"his sister followed him to the lavatory and stood outside to make sure that he didn't sneak out. After a while there was a thump. He always disappears with a thump. She looked inside and he was gone. Fifteen minutes later he re-appeared in his bedroom wearing different clothes."

The world's greatest psychic?

IF YOU find that hard to swallow, what will you make of Roberto Campagni, an Italian surveyor who has just been described by *National Enquirer*, the mass-circulation American newspaper, as "the world's greatest psychic". He, too, can make objects appear out of thin air, in a way that has impressed many scientists.

Campagni, a shy 48-year-old bachelor, has materialised hundreds of objects for astonished witnesses. The phenomenon begins, apparently, with his hands beginning to glow with light. On occasion he passes this cloud to an onlooker who is then able to see it solidify into an object.

This is the testimony of a Roman Catholic priest, Father Eugenio Feriarti: "He put a luminous ball of light into my hands and there it became a small silver angel. I'm convinced there was no trickery involved."

Dr Luigi Lapi, a psychiatrist, declared, "It contrasts absolutely with every principle of physics. But I've seen it happen. The phenomenon is true. It is impossible, but it is true."

Campagni, who does not like

publicity and refuses to be photographed, has not accepted any money for his psychic performances during the 30 years he has been demonstrating his remarkable powers.

Chain reaction

AN American surgeon, Dr Ed Maxey, who was a participant in the London Parascience Conference, told a fascinating story. "One of my theatre nurses had a boyfriend, a law enforcement officer, who was involved in a high-speed car chase and was badly injured. He was taken to hospital in a coma and could only mumble incoherently. Everyone thought he would be an idiot. All he wanted to do was drink lots of water.

"Then a Puerto Rican happened to pass the man's bed and he said 'He's not mumbling, he's speaking an old-fashioned Spanish. He's saying that he is chained to the wall and dying of thirst.' Had the accident caused him to re-live a past life?

Dr Maxey, incidentally, is an unconventional surgeon. He has returned from Japan with a device, invented by a Dr Motayama, which is reputed to be able to heal people.

Does it have a future?

A NEW magazine, *Premonition Times*, has been launched in the USA which – in its own words – "dares to reveal things to come". As well as publishing individual premonitions it will feature a wide

range of subjects, including psychic phenomena and prophecy. It is being produced by Roger Rejda and Dr Joe R. Jochmans, through the Premonitions Center, Nebraska.

As well as recording spontaneous premonitions the magazine invites its readers to try "directed" premonitions – such as guessing the outcome of the next presidential election or the fate of California in the 1980s.

If that sounds no better than the media's approach to the subject, it is only fair to report that *Premonition Times* does appear to be attempting a better analysis of such premonitions than others in the field. Its method is to classify each prophecy according to two elements: its prophetic accuracy quotient (PAQ) and prophetic quality (PQ).

It has applied this test to predictions made by famous psychics, including Nostradamus and Jeane Dixon (see first feature in this issue of *Alpha*). It records that Mrs Dixon's predictions, since 1970, have become more descriptive than precise (dropping her PQ from 9 to 6), and her score of accurate forecasts has declined sharply, leaving her with a PAQ 20% lower than her earlier rating.

With *Premonition Times* monitoring their forecasts, we can expect our modern seers to watch their Ps and Qs in future.

contd. on p29

No stone is left unturned in the author's efforts to free genuine paranormal knowledge from sensationalism and nonsense. Psychic experience, dreams, trance states, ghosts, hallucinations, kirlian aura, psychic healing, astrology, palmistry, graphology and ESP are among the subjects he explores. He views every controversy from the Bermuda Triangle and the Philippine healers to the metal bending exploits of Geller with common sense and realism, qualities which he considers to be more useful in distinguishing paranormal truth from fiction than any amount of scientific theory.

His own alternative theory of spirit in space is interesting, if a little obscure and self indulgent for me. But it is the accounts of his own psychic experiences and the anecdotal evidence which he has collected from those of others, which I find the most fascinating aspect of the book. As he says, it is more of this kind of material which is needed if the study of the paranormal is to move on from being the "laughing stock of the uncommitted and the butt of the scientist".

Sheila Hart

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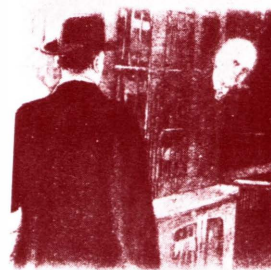
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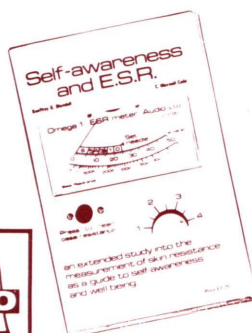
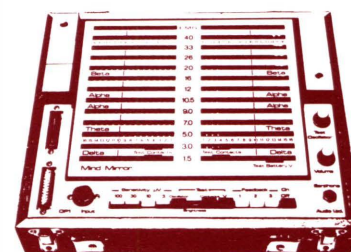
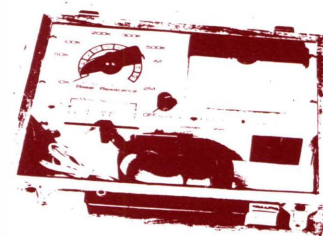
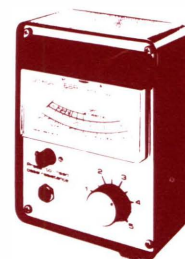
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